

Queensland Native Police

The First Twenty Years



Hagil. Corroboree Lane.

PAUL DILLON

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By

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Courtesy of QSL

Frederick Walker
Commandant of Native Police 1848 to 1854

Preface

The White Rabbit put on his spectacles.
"Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?" he asked.
"Begin at the beginning," the King said, very gravely,
"and go on till you come to the end: then stop."

The problem is, of course, that contrary to the schooling I received as a small boy, I am now informed that the settlement of Australia or to be politically correct, the invasion of Australia, was a sorry and sordid affair with little or no merit attaching to it nor, indeed, to any subsequent transaction in the history of the settlement of Australia. It seems my esteemed and worthy ancestors should have stayed in Ireland and suffered to be stripped of their land by the landlord, the bailiff and tyrant, rather than to have sailed far over the oceans to the bright shores of freedom in faraway Botany Bay. For if they had, I would have benefited by the liberation of Ireland from British rule, the establishment of the Republic, the introduction of the euro and, perhaps, the greatest of all, a European heritage of astounding beauty and cultural significance, Erin Go Bragh. Hoorah for Ireland, Hoorah for the Republic, Ooh Ah Up the Ra, Chuckie Ár Lá. Instead, I was born here and must be screwed here, as I plod the weary path of a penitent for all the sins and failings committed and omitted by my forefathers and their accomplices in the creation of the sorry history of Australia. Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.

However, if we drop the humbug and take to speaking plain Strine as a fair dinkum Aussie would, we may make progress in analysing the history of Australia rather than be bogged like a duck on the Murrumbidgee flats, where the dog sits on the Tuckerbox nine miles from Gundagai, in left-wing, guilt-ridden flapdoodle and cant.

There's a track winding back to an old-fashioned shack
Along the road to Gundagai
Where the gums are growin' and the Murrumbidgee's flowin'
Beneath the sunny sky

Now one could run the risk of being an Uncle Remus and start telling stories in an unsophisticated way, which did not reveal or expose the true state of affairs but merely reassured the reader with a wonderful defence of colonialism as it existed in Australia. So, before I carry out the King's injunction, I must say a little on the subject of history. Apart from it being a boring little tit, history is like selling Bibles; so, I need to ask by whose yardstick shall I tell the story: The Authorised or the New Age? In other words, shall I stick with the ancien régime: the discovery of new knowledge, the testing of received knowledge and the honest and accurate writing or telling of that knowledge, or shall I cross the quadrangle and follow the yellow brick road to social justice and cultural competency?¹ Am I to follow the age-old mantra of high-quality research and scholarship that advances the state of knowledge and understanding of Australian colonial history or am I to hop aboard the Magical Mystery Tour and go with the flow to la-la land where the sheepdog drives the station ute, the sheep roll around heaven all day and the Aborigines invented

¹ Palo Alto University's first core value is social justice, cultural competency, and diversity.

the wheel and went to the moon? Moreover, I have been assured that none other than Henry Reynolds himself will conduct the tour.

What is a historian? A man who sits in an Ivory Tower toiling away at the great puzzles of history, while scratching his tonsure or is it his arse? Daily plodding through the chaos of historical texts and sources; daydreaming endlessly on his desiderata. He can show us his jigsaw pieces but not the finished picture, which lies hidden deep in his mind's eye. He has never milked a cow; skinned a cat; lanced a boil; been a catch-fart at a Lord Mayor's banquet; nor stood before a jury pleading for a man's innocence. Yet when the jigsaw is completed, we are supposed to roll over on our backs and pant like lapdogs at the bewildering perspicacity of the sage in revealing to us, petty peons, our glorious and heroic past. In the case of white settlers, it happens to be an infamous and darkly tainted past of clearing the land of bush and blacks, if you believe Henry Reynolds's rat's nest of history.

Australia was founded on the principles of patriarchy, Anglo-Celtic hegemony and advancement by hard work and merit. The left-wing school of history is a derivative of Marxism. Marxism is a political ideology based on slave mentality,² which is the rejection of individual triumphs, achievements and success in the face of isolation, deprivation, loneliness, and environmental and psychological adversities in the course of nation building. The slave's catchcry is: Everybody is equal but some are more equal than others. Moreover, we did that not you on your Pat Malone.³

Since Australia was discovered and taken possession of by the British, it is said the principle of discovery gave title to the British government against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession.⁴ Captain Arthur Phillip on disembarkation and entry, together with the formal proclamation and reading of his instructions, duly bestowed British sovereignty over the Territory of New South Wales and its Dependencies. Arising out of that is the fact that the Territory of New South Wales and its Dependencies came under the control of the British Parliament, which had omnipotent powers.⁵ The point I am coming to is this, the History Wars. As dear old Eric Arthur Blair, aka George Orwell, said: My country Right or Left.⁶ This certainly is not the sentiment of certain historians in Australia. I don't intend to get into a lengthy debate about the History Wars. The point I wish to make can be covered by a quote from another dear old lefty, Frank Hardy, writing in his *The Unlucky Australians*:⁷

I downed my beer and when through the yard for a Jerry Riddel. As I came back an old aboriginal woman, drunk and flabby, came out of the Ladies. She flounced into a chair beside a round table in the yard mumbling. In her eyes dwelt the mystery and the defeat – and a dozen flies. She sat forlorn and disgusting – a symbol of white Australia's guilt.

This incident occurred in Bourke, NSW. The prohibition on Aborigines' access to alcohol was removed in 1962. Is there any room in this debate for Aborigines to step up to the mark and accept responsibility for their own wellbeing and advancement or will it always remain the fault of the white settlers and their descendants? Incidentally, Mr Hardy failed to mention the toilet was a non-segregated facility; lucky he wasn't in Little Rock, Arkansas or he would have had to go back inside the pub to go to the whites only pissoir.

² Slave mentality is based on resentment—devaluing that which the master values and the slave does not have.

³ The Marxist concept of justice "To each according to his need, from each according to his ability."

⁴ Johnson & Graham's Lessee v. McIntosh, 21 U.S. 543 (1823). This is for the settlement deniers.

⁵ There is no constitutional limit to the British Parliament and after cutting off the head of Charles I and sacking James II it was omnipotent. For the purist, see Dicey and The Colonial Laws Validity Act 1865 (28 & 29 Vict. c. 63).

⁶ An essay published in 1940 by George Orwell.

⁷ Pan Books Ltd, London, 1978 p 19. I know, what about the Moree Baths 1965?

If you have a look at Australian history as a punter might, then you possibly have four days on which you may care to have a drink and a bit of a knees-up:⁸ Australia Day, ANZAC Day, May Day and the Queen's Birthday. Now the lefties have just about crippled or abolished Australia Day. So the idea of a local community having a founder's procession led by an Arthur Phillip look-a-like and a series of drays or flat-tops following-on displaying the arts and crafts of the pioneer settlers is beyond the pale and an absolute affront to Aborigines and their supporters but like all things aboriginal, if you turn the coin over and ask what they can do for their country, you would be met by absolute silence until they regrouped and then you would have on your hands an angry mob of demonstrators. Of course, what the historical Australia Day really celebrated is not the brave new world of Advance Australia or the Lucky Country, created by a bunch of felons and Run Hunters, but the grim reality of mounted bushwhackers shooting down scores of Aborigines on their home turf, according to Reynolds. May Day and the Queen's Birthday are virtually non-events apart from the faithful doing whatever they do on their sacred day. In the case of May Day, the Wobblies walk down George Street with their boots on to the tune of Colonel Bogey and then adjourn to the Breakfast Creek pub for a top-up and to sing the *Internationale*.

Might I propose here that the Trades Hall invite all those Aborigines who wish to commemorate the *Forgotten War*, as Mr Reynolds calls it, to march at the front of the May Day parade suitably equipped with their battle colours, banners, standards, guidons, tribal pennants, badges and honour rolls. This may well prove a solution to the problem and release Australia Day from the slings and arrows of social justice warriors and the modern day bashi-bazouk.

This then leaves Anzac Day. As I understand Mr Reynolds, he says:

... it will be unconscionable to indulge in a crescendo of commemoration and ignore the fundamental importance of the war between settlers and Indigenous nations within Australia. This is the forgotten war of conquest that saw the expropriation of the most productive land over vast continental distances and the transfer of sovereignty from the Aborigines to the British government and its successor colonial administrations. This is the war that made the nation, not the fateful invasion of Turkey at the direction of the imperial government. If we assess tangible, measurable development so lasting significance, how can the two be compared?

The aim of left-wing cadres is to attack and destroy the foundations of Australia through its history by promoting the aspirations of what was initially called the proletariat but what is now come to be called Identity Politics. Since the proletariat as a class are no longer victims because of increased wages, better working conditions and a better standard of living, the left has been driven to find new classes of victims in the left's struggle for political power, Voila! Identity Politics. In other words, every ragtag and bobtail is entitled to social justice and a seat at the High Table. Consequently, the left chose an amorphous class of mestizo people, labelled them Aborigines⁹ and then sought to erect around them an edifice of not only a heroic class struggle against repression and apartheid but liberation and land rights as well. If the left-wing cannot destroy the historical keystones of Australia, then they must damage or cripple it as severely as they can.

To achieve this, they must construct a historical image and narrative that shows Australian aboriginal natives populated the Australian continent in large numbers and had a technological or exploitive connection to the land rather than diffuse mythological and spiritual ties to the land where they roamed a habitat more concerned with the ecological and fecundity of their space than

⁸ Perhaps I should have said a piss-up.

⁹ Pick up a mestizo group of fringe dwellers, re-define them through loose self-identification criteria; give them a back-story of historical persecution and then exploit the image to undermine the leading white culture which had long out-grown leftist populist rhetoric.

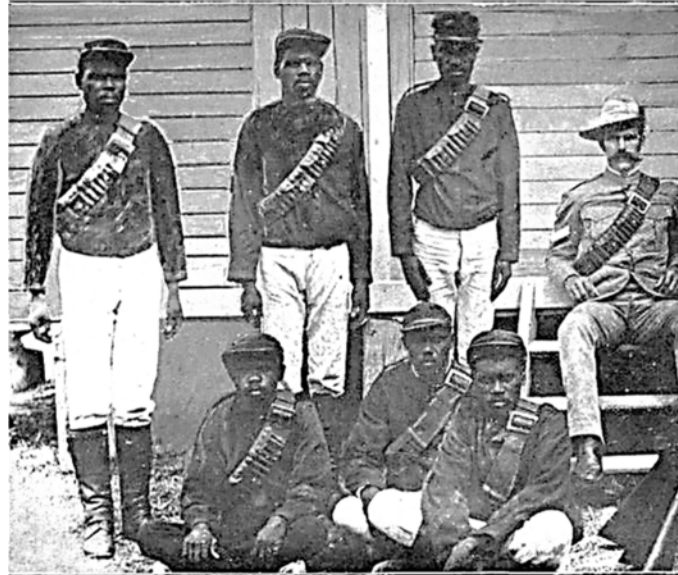
altering it to achieve increased productivity. Their stories and beliefs did not allow them to change the landscape or the set rhythm or cycle of their patch for the purposes of creating a surplus or greater efficiency. They had no productive relationship with the land or the animals or the plants. There was no market only subsistence. In other words, by showing a pre-colonial construct of close or dense settlement by Australian aboriginal natives and the active use of the land in the production of food and material goods then, firstly, the left-wing can argue that the act of settlement was, if not an invasion, at least an illegal act of displacement and seizure of aboriginal lands and assets and secondly, there was aboriginal resistance to the unlawful occupation evidenced by “20 to 30 000 dead.” Furthermore, the reconstructed invasion mythology requires a racial dimension, where the mestizo remnant can be re-born again as the First Nation by simply adopting some make-believe tribal name with the approbation of a likeminded group of self-anointed kooris, to prosecute the new ideology.

If the colony is founded on illegal and immoral principles, then subsequent acts of governance and settlement are equally unsound and illegal giving rise to the need for a re-birth or reformation of the social and legal basis of the nation. In other words, a new constitution will be required where the foundation of power does not lie with the Crown (an indivisible symbol of unity and solidarity, the host) but in some fragmented, collective style republic with a shattered Volksgeist (“national spirit”) and no cohesive identity where sovereignty is shared between indigenous elements¹⁰ and federal and state elements with reserve powers awarded to a head of state and indigenous groups, so the left-wing dialectic goes. In other words, the destruction of an existing home-grown homogeneous regime, which we once had and are now at the real risk of losing, and the redistribution of the national assets and accumulated wealth, which have been acquired over a very long period of time, to undeserving and unproductive sectors of the nation on the perverse and erroneous principle of social justice-the right of the deadbeat to remain a parasitic loafer. What comes after this chaos who knows, but the ever-present jackals wait patiently for their moiety?



¹⁰ See the Uluru Statement of 2017 and related comment.

Introduction



NATIVE MOUNTED POLICE OF QUEENSLAND WITH WHITE OFFICER.

Haydon, A. L., The trooper police of Australia

At beginning of the 15th century, extensive overseas exploration emerged as a powerful factor in European culture. It also marked the rise in Europe of colonialism and mercantilism as national policies. Many lands previously unknown to Europeans were discovered during this period. Australia sits in the southern hemisphere far from the maddening crowds of Europe and if any one of you has ever made the pilgrimage to Europe, then you will know what I mean. Now, I pause here to acknowledge that I may have adopted a Eurocentric or Anglo-centric view of the location of Australia. For, if you were an Australian aboriginal native in say, 1788, you wouldn't have given a tinker's curse where Europe was or dear old Blighty. What was important though, was that the geographic location of the continent of Australia was unknown to the world.

However, the known world knew it was an unknown and that it was just a matter of joining the lines of longitude and latitude together to fix its position on Earth.¹¹ On the other hand, the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia knew nothing of the known world nor, indeed, of Australia as a large landmass. They were disconnected from the outside world and had been so for 60,000 years, if you accept the upbeat view of their presence in Australia. When I say the known world, I just don't mean European powers. One must be strict, and include the ever present and equally ancient civilisations of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and the Chinese who, each in their turn, conquered or influenced the great Malay Archipelago, from Rangoon to Cebu, up to recent times. Now some wit will put up his hand and say, Please Sir, what about the Makassans? Yes, they

¹¹ Captain Cook's secret instructions: Whereas the making Discoverys of Countries hitherto unknown, and the Attaining a Knowledge of distant Parts which though formerly discover'd have yet been but imperfectly explored, will redound greatly to the Honour of this Nation as a Maritime Power, as well as to the Dignity of the Crown of Great Britain, and may tend greatly to the advancement of the Trade and Navigation thereof; and Whereas there is reason to imagine that a Continent or Land of great extent, may be found to the Southward ...

fiddled about the fringes of northern Australia and it could be said that up until the arrival of the First Fleet, the top end of Australia was the entry point through which any and all features of change or variation may have diffused into Australia but on the face of it, the cultural impact of the Makassan contact was regional. I qualify that by saying even though the contact was trivial, collecting sea cucumbers, it was frequent and persistent contact over a long period of time which produced a devastating impact on the wellbeing of the aboriginal natives of Australia by the transmission of the disease of smallpox into the indigenous community.¹² The disease entered Australia in the same way as hitherto all other intruders had, until the arrival of the white man who entered by following the sailing instructions of the VOC:¹³ “seek the latitudes of 35, 36, 40 to 44 degrees south, depending on where the seamen can find the best west winds.”

As I said, the geographic location of the continent of Australia was unknown to the world, to all the major civilisations of the world apart from the odd reef rat, seadog or privateer of whatever flag, who might have drifted and shifted the Seven Seas. The European view was that the place was Terra Australis Incognita and wasn't worth knowing, let alone having, because it had no natural resources of any value or note; and the inhabitants were naked and unfriendly. Europe, Asia, and Africa were prodigal in their gifts; both the Americas rendered rich tribute to man, but Australia gave nothing. The aboriginal blacks were the poorest of all savages. They possessed neither grains nor fruits, neither flocks nor herds. Their land gave nothing because it had nothing to give; only sufficient for their barest animal needs, and to white men it appeared to have nothing at all to offer. The consequences of this was that the aboriginal natives were equally ignorant of the known world not just the world of the Europeans, Catholic or Protestant but also the eastern worlds of Islam, Buddhism, the Chinese, etc. & etc. Captain Arthur Phillip summed it up this way:

I could have wished to have given your Lordship a more pleasing account of our present situation; and am persuaded I shall have that satisfaction hereafter; nor do I doubt but that value of this country will prove the most valuable acquisition Great Britain ever made; at the same time no country offers less assistance to the first settlers than this does; nor do I think any country could be more disadvantageously placed with respect to support from the mother country, on which for a few years we must entirely depend.¹⁴

That great Australian, Alfred William Howitt (1830-1908), explorer, natural scientist and pioneer authority on Aboriginal culture and social organisation put this way:

A great deal of nonsense has been talked about the aborigines, as it regards their social and moral condition. Had they been in a more civilised state it would have been singular; for no country on the face of the earth yet discovered has been so destitute of the means of fixed residence, corn and fruits, for the localisation of a people. ... The mode of life of the natives of New Holland is the natural result, age after age, of the one compelling necessity of roaming over the land in search of food. The blandness of the climate, too, tends to perpetuate such a kind of existence. Their desires are simple as their food, and easily satisfied. ... had it been at all a land of corn and oil and wine, it might have been otherwise. Its indigenous fruits are few and contemptible. The dwellings of the natives are such as would naturally result from their wandering life.¹⁵

The origin of the Australian aboriginal native is enshrouded in obscurity, and currently subject to much uncertain conjecture. There are a variety of opinions entertained upon this subject; and I

¹² Campbell, Judy, *Invisible Invaders*, Melbourne University Press, 2002. Also, “it is a curious fact that the natives of the Gulf are deeply marked with smallpox, showing that the disease must have been prevalent some years ago, probably caught from Malay traders.” *Queenslander* 4 October 1884 p 543.

¹³ VOC stands for "Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie" (United East India Company).

¹⁴ HRA Vol 1 p 51 (9 July 1788).

¹⁵ Richard Howitt, *Impressions of Australia Felix*, Longmans, 1845 p 197.

leave the matter to those who wish to run down that particular rabbit hole. The period I write of is the last thirty years of the eighteenth century from Cook to say the time of Federation, 1901. In this period each succeeding wave of settler advancement was by and large met with aboriginal natives who were still untouched by civilisation.¹⁶

As to their system of governance, they were not to be regarded as one extended community, acknowledging authority vested in one or more principal persons, but divided into a number of petty groups, denominated tribes, which seldom include more than two or three hundred in the largest and most influential, whilst by far the greater proportion were small and feeble; yet, whether large or small, weak or powerful, they were entirely distinct from each other, as it relates to their habitat, and the control and management of their own affairs, which for all general purposes were directed by the mutual consent of the adult male members.¹⁷

Thus, making for isolation and aggression amongst the various tribes or groupings. Within their defined habitat, the Aborigines lived a nomadic existence based on a hunter-gatherer lifestyle employing stone age technology supported by fire for hunting and fighting and some weaving like dilly bags and fishing nets. I don't wish to be disparaging by saying the Aborigines lived by sticks and stones alone but that is the summation of their technological status. There existed an oral tradition involving an intricate mythology as well as societal norms governing kinship and marriage together with rules relating to punishment as well as practical instruction in collecting and processing the natural food of the group. Their rock art catalogues what animals played a significant part of their food chain and not one of them might be domesticated. Apart from that their minds were as naked as their bodies when it came to knowledge and understanding beyond the immediate aboriginal frame of reference which was the Sisyphean tasks of hunting and gathering within their habitat. Membership within each language group was based on birthright, and relationships; responsibilities and obligations within the group were also predetermined. The environment was controlled by the spiritual rather than physical means and ceremonies were deeply tied to the tribe's habitat, salient features or landmarks having meaning or existence from mythical stories.¹⁸

Historians of the left investigating the colonisation of Australia concentrate upon what they allege are the crimes, omissions and failures of the white colonial apparatus in settling and governing the country. The Aborigines were victims, they say and thus are immune from any inquiry or serious analysis into their response or lack thereof to the settlers' actions and policies of settlement and governance. The idea or assertion that the entry into Australia by officers, agents and servants of the British Crown in 1788 was an illegal act and furthermore, should be characterised as an invasion is an absurdity, lacking any serious-minded credibility. Yet it remains the *cri de guerre* of the left and its *troupe de partisans*. It is beyond doubt that at some stage given the fundamental wellspring of human nature, through expansion and knowledge, Australia would have been acquired to meet that appetite. However, the left's *modus operandi* is to argue that in the scheme of things colonialism was authoritarian, exploitive and repressive thus, criminal or, at least, illegal.

Therefore, all actions or omissions in furtherance of colonial expansion were illegal and any reaction by the indigenous subjects whether cooperative or uncooperative are beyond scrutiny and can only be portrayed as a justifiable, heroic, liberation struggle. The reasoning is analogous to English criminal law where the traditional position of both the praxis and the theory has been to deny the relevance of the victim's behaviour. It is said that the criminal law is made to protect

¹⁶ The phrase of the time was *myall blacks* or *wild blacks*, Aborigines untouched and living in a traditional way.

¹⁷ Dredge, James Brief Notices of the Aborigines of NSW, James Harrison, Geelong 1845 p 7.

¹⁸ *White Man Got No Dreaming* Essays 1938-1973 by W. E. H. Stanner, ANU Press, Canberra, 1979 p 32.

those who are harmed. The input of the victim, given the responsibility of the offender, must be put aside. To illustrate the point, A intentionally injures B. B seeks medical advice and is told he needs a blood transfusion to save his life. B assembles his family and spiritual adviser and together they inform the medical practitioner that B will not consent to a blood transfusion because it offends his religious and cultural beliefs. B is warned once again that without the transfusion he will die. B dies and A is tried for murder and convicted. A appeals and argues B is the author of his own death because he wilfully rejected lifesaving therapy out of ignorance and further, religious and cultural beliefs are irrelevant in the event of imminent death. The court rejected the appeal based on the rule that you take the victim as you find them.¹⁹ Of course, remaining in a state of ignorance can lead to serious economic downfall, relationship crises, legal issues, and more. Like B, it can lead to death. It is important for human survival to be knowledgeable on different topics.

The concept of ignorance, lack of knowledge, describes a person or groups of persons in the state of being unaware. Stanner said the Aborigines were a deeply religious people. Surely, the inference is that they were ignorant and bigoted, unwilling to change. Now as to the frame of reference of the Aborigines of Australia, they were unaware, ignorant, and lacking knowledge of the beliefs, schemas, preferences, values, cultures and other ways in which the rest of the world behaved, operated and functioned. I am being neither judgmental nor Eurocentric when I say the Aborigines were ignorant of the ways of the world beyond their habitat. It's a fact based on empirical evidence. Lauriston Sharp in her article *Steel Axes for Stone-Age Australians* made an interesting observation:

Among the bush Yir Yoront the only means of water transport is a light wood log to which they cling in their constant swimming of rivers, salt creeks, and tidal inlets. These natives know that tribes 45 miles further north have a bark canoe. They know these northern tribes can thus fish from midstream or out at sea, instead of clinging to the river banks and beaches, that they can cross coastal waters infested with crocodiles, sharks, sting rays, and Portuguese men-of-war without danger. They know the materials of which the canoe is made exist in their own environment. But they also know, as they say, that they do not have canoes because their own mythical ancestors did not have them. They assume that the canoe was part of the ancestral universe of the northern tribes. For them, then, the adoption of the canoe would not be simply a matter of learning a number of new behavioural skills for its manufacture and use. The adoption would require a much more difficult procedure; the acceptance by the entire society of a myth, either locally developed or borrowed, to explain the presence of the canoe, to associate it with some one or more of the several hundred mythical ancestors (and how (to) decide which?), and thus establish it as an accepted totem of one of the clans ready to be used by the whole community. The Yir Yoront have not made this adjustment, and in this case, we can only say that for the time being at least, ideas have won out over very real pressures for technological change. In the elaborateness and explicitness of the totemic ideologies we seem to have one explanation for the notorious stability of Australian cultures under aboriginal conditions, an explanation which gives due weight to the importance of ideas in determining human behaviour.²⁰

If a neighbouring tribe or clan could not accept or adopt a more efficient technological improvement within their economy because of their beliefs, customs, traditions, religions, etc, then what are their prospects of survival when competing forces challenge their existence? Sharp draws this conclusion arising out of the introduction of the steel axe:

The most disturbing effects of the steel axe, operating in conjunction with other elements also being introduced from the white man's several sub-cultures, developed in the realm of traditional ideas, sentiments, and values. These were undermined at a rapidly mounting rate, with no new conceptions being defined to replace them. The result was the erection of a mental and moral void

¹⁹ R v Blaue [1975] 1 WLR 1411, CA.

²⁰ Lauriston Sharp, *Steel Axes for Stone-Age Australians*, Human Organization, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1952, pp. 17-22

which foreshadowed the collapse and destruction of all Yir Yoront culture, if not, indeed, the extinction of the biological group itself.²¹

The conclusion that I draw from Sharp's study is that tribal Aborigines or uncontacted Aborigines and their culture were at great risk of extinction not just from les grands maux of colonialisation that are so characteristic of the Black Armband ideology such as, dispossession, disease, firearms, and substances of addiction but also from an item of such obvious utility as the steel axe. This demonstrates how inevitable the consequences of any cultural or technological challenges to Aborigines would be. It further suggests that these outlandish conspiracy theories of the Black Armband Brigade against the white settlers are without foundation and that aboriginal culture and life style was capable of being undermined by even the most benign of foreign objects. AW Howitt put it this way:

If the aborigine could have become physically and mentally such as a white man, he would have been in equilibrium with his new surroundings. If his physical and mental nature had been able to become modified with sufficient rapidity to come into equilibrium with the changed conditions, he could have survived. But the former alternative is self-evidently an impossibility and probably the strength of hereditary physical and mental peculiarities has made the latter alternative also an impossibility. The consequence has been that he is rapidly and inevitably becoming extinct.²²

What is the relevance of aboriginal ignorance and their closed culture in the foundation of the Australian nation? The Perry Expedition to Japan was not only one of exploration and surveying for the purposes of navigation but to open contact with the Japanese for trade and commerce and if necessary, to force the Japanese to open their borders. The Japanese had been steadfast in their refusal to admit foreigners. Eventually seeing the error of maintaining their ignorance of modern western culture and science, the Japanese took steps to remove their ignorance by not only admitting the westerners but also by embracing western science, which ultimately led them to becoming an impressive modern western nation. This small event in the history of human interaction may assist in clarifying the approach to the situation of the aboriginal native of Australia. They too were like the Japanese totally different from the westerner who stood at their door seeking entrance for purposes of trade, commerce and exploration for land and commodities to trade. Unlike the Japanese who clearly gave notice to Perry that he was not welcomed and would be refused entry, no such acts of repulsion or expulsion were carried out by the Aborigines. They simply looked on in subdued indifference to the entry of the English. It is beyond question that the Aborigines had a duty to parley with the English as the Japanese had with Perry, rather than skulking off into the fastness of the Australian scrub. Now it is possible to accept that the Aborigines' actions or omissions were dictated by their ignorance or lack of familiarity with Europeans and that until the Europeans had plainly demonstrated their good intentions of peaceful dealings with the Aborigines and the Aborigines, in turn, had had sufficient time to build up experience and confidence in treating with the Europeans, then little progress could be made in bringing the groups together to forge an understanding of the occupation of the country. However, after an appropriate period of adjustment, if the Aborigines continued to refuse or remain recalcitrant, then they could be admonished to hear and enter into consultation.

Be that as it may, when dealing with myall or uncontacted Aborigines, the peace maker would need to overcome some insurmountable barriers. The identification of a negotiator for the Aborigines would be difficult, almost an impossibility; and difference of language between tribes,

²¹ Ibid., p 21.

²² Kamilaroi and Kurnai: Group-marriage and relationship, and marriage by elopement, drawn chiefly from the usage of the Australian aborigines. Also, the Kurnai tribe, their customs in peace and war By Lorimer Fison, M. A., and A. W. Howitt, F. G. S., Melbourne [etc.], G. Robertson, 1880 p 185.

coupled with their defective understanding of diplomacy, and with the entire absence of any system of authority among them would render it hopeless to treat for an agreement or an accord.

Elkin described the Aborigines as follows:

The reaction of an aboriginal people to the presence and culture of an intrusive and settling people is not based necessarily on curiosity, acquisition and imitation. Such drives are familiar to us of the western world, even in cross-cultural situations; we might infer, therefore, that because our culture is comparatively rich, the less well-endowed peoples, when confronted with it, would desire to examine, acquire and imitate it. In Australian Aboriginal culture, however, the individual is trained not to show curiosity, indeed, not to be curious. Thus, during initiation he only looks at rites and objects when told to do so, and he does not ask the "why"; he waits until he is told, and that in instalments. Moreover, both men and women grow up accepting the fact that sections of knowledge are restricted to one or more groups, and are not free to all. With this background, the Aborigines consider quite naturally that the ways, possessions and beliefs of the white man are his secret, his own possession, and are not to be "taken by storm" or imitated. They are just factually "another kind" and neither envy nor acquisitiveness is aroused. They do not expect the white man to pry upon their life.²³

What were the British asking the Aborigines to understand and accept initially? The British way of life, which involved firstly, learning to speak English and preferably learning also to read and write, a concept completely foreign to them because they had no writing system; then, to accept the Christian faith, the British judicial system, the British political system and the British work ethic and social organisations. Historically, huge sums of public and private money have been spent on endeavouring to persuade the Aborigines to adopt Anglo-Saxon ways of thinking and living. Not only have the funds been without effect, the effort has been thrown back at the donors who have in turn been accused of mala fides by seeking to implement eugenics and social Darwinism among many other forms of social engineering. In reality, all the white settler was trying to do was to persuade the Aborigines to change their way of life and become God-fearing citizens with a highly developed work-ethic. The last attempt at this form of change at a public venue was the 1966 NT Cattle Industry Case.²⁴

We agree with the pastoralists that there are many aborigines on cattle stations who for cultural reasons and through lack of education are unable to perform work in a way normally required in our economic society. We agree that the problem of assimilating or integrating these aborigines into our society is a difficult one with many facets. ... There must be one industrial law, similarly applied, to all Australians, aboriginal or not.²⁵

After the original reason for the settlement in Australia was superseded that of a penal colony, the venue then became a settlement where immigrants came to conduct commercial, agricultural, pastoral and mining activities so as to enter the UK market of the day and accumulate wealth. These activities required land and the settlers with their means of production: herds of domesticated animals and shepherds were granted land on an ever-expanding frontier. The nature of the frontier was such that settlers would cross into an unsettled area containing an uncontacted tribe or myall blacks to use the vernacular, who naturally, had no experience of white settlers' activities. Inevitably the actions of the settler or squatter would disturb the tribe and where the tribe had a cohort of warriors not lacking in bravado, then some form of collision would occur resulting in the death of the whites and/or the destruction of their pastoral assets. The reaction of

²³ Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia by AP Elkin, *AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST* 53, 1951 p 164.

²⁴ Cattle Station Industry (Northern Territory) Award, 1951 (1966) 113 CAR 651.

²⁵ Ibid., p 669. This decision is a classic example of a tribunal ignoring the evidence and acting on the feel-good principles of moral superiority and "The White Man's Burden".

the authorities would be to send in Native Police who would engage these troublesome warriors, which generally led to their death because they would resist the police. Thus, the tribe would then become a mendicant upon the squatter with the inevitable long-term disintegration of the group through white diseases and white foodstuffs which were inimical to the health and wellbeing of Aborigines bred in tribal ways. This pathology did not occur in all cases of contact between whites and Aborigines on the frontier. True to human nature, some Aborigines avoided collisions with settlers and entered into a variety of relationships but without exception, the nexus depended on sustenance being given to the Aborigines in return for what I call make-believe aboriginal labour. The alternative way of describing this connection is to use Elkin's phrase, intelligent parasitism.

A W Howitt (17 April 1830 – 7 March 1908) the much-respected Australian anthropologist, explorer and naturalist put it this way:

When the first settlement of white men was formed in Gippsland, the country was found to be well peopled by an aboriginal tribe. ... The advent of the white man, however, changed all this. Numbers were killed in conflicts with the settlers; and these aborigines were mostly, though not all, fighting men of the tribe. Other individuals collected round stations and townships. Their food was altered, and, as a whole, their society was disorganized, and their general mode of life profoundly modified. ... They only adopted some of the habits of the white men; but with these they also adopted some of the vicious habits of the new comers. They fell, it may be said, not only without a struggle, but voluntarily into the fatal enticements of intoxication; their women fell, not only into intoxication, but into fatally vicious connections with the worst of the white men. This reacted again upon the tribe, for, with these newly-acquired evil habits, newly-acquired evil diseases were introduced. In addition, safeguards to health, which had become through custom part almost of their nature, were no longer regarded. ... It is, therefore, no wonder that colds, rheumatism, pneumonia, and phthisis have been frightfully and fatally common. Besides these diseases — produced probably in greater intensity by their own change of habits — other diseases, which the whites generally have as children in a mild form, such as measles or whooping-cough, attacked them as adults, and with fatal effects. It is difficult to point out all the directions in which change of conditions, consequent upon the settlement of Gippsland by the whites, has operated injuriously upon the native tribe. ... It is not necessary to continue the enumeration of instances in which altered conditions have been injurious to the aboriginal natives of Gippsland. Those I have given may suffice; and I think that, with some show of probability, I may allege that the dying out of this tribe has been the result, not of some mysterious cause, but the cumulative influence of many and various causes, all arising out of altered surrounding conditions to which either the aborigines must become adapted, or under which they must become extinct. If the aborigine could have become physically and mentally such as a white man, he would have been in equilibrium with his new surroundings. If his physical and mental nature had been able to become modified with sufficient rapidity to come into equilibrium with the changed conditions, he could have survived. But the former alternative is self-evidently an impossibility and probably the strength of hereditary physical and mental peculiarities has made the latter alternative also an impossibility. The consequence has been that he is rapidly and inevitably becoming extinct.²⁶

Edward Micklethwaite Curr (25 December 1820 – 3 August 1889) the Australian pastoralist, author, aboriginal advocate and squatter took the same view:

The subject of disease naturally leads to the consideration of the decline in the numbers of our Blacks, and, in fact, to what seems likely to be their total extinction at no distant date. Experience shows that a populous town will kill out the tribes which live near enough to visit it daily in from two to ten years; venereal in such cases becoming common, lung diseases prevalent, and births ceasing. As a consequence, the Blacks have disappeared from all our old settlements long since. In more sparsely-settled country the process is somewhat different and more gradual, but it leads to the same end. In the bush, many tribes have disappeared, and the rest are disappearing. Towns destroy

²⁶ A. W. Howitt, *The Kurnai: Their Customs in Peace and War*, G. Robertson, Melbourne, 1880 p 184.

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by drunkenness and debauchery; in the country, from fifteen to five and twenty percent, fall by the rifle; the tribe then submits, and diseases of European origin complete the process of extermination.²⁷

Governor Bowen in writing to the Duke of Newcastle made the following observation:

The life of the pioneers of colonization on the distant prairies of the interior of this Colony presents several distinct phases, when viewed in its connection with the Aborigines. The first sight of the horse and his rider appears to strike a tribe of blacks, as yet ignorant of the white man's existence, with supernatural terror, similar to the awe with which the American Indians contemplated the comrades of Columbus and of Cortez. But superstitious fear is soon succeeded by bitter hostility. Mutual provocations between the races lead to mutual reprisals. The fiercer spirits among the native warriors fall before the superior arms and skill of the Europeans, or are driven still further backwards into the unexplored wilderness. The milder natures sink ere long into the well-fed dependents of the Colonists; and in the course of a few years no danger remains to be apprehended from them, beyond some isolated acts of robbery or revenge.²⁸

The great and far-sighted guru William Stanner said this:

The blacks have never been able to make a formal protest, except by an occasional spear. They have never been able to stir and hold any lasting interest in their plight. They themselves have no notion of tribal tragedy on a national scale, nor perhaps would it interest them if they had. Most of their interests and loyalties are narrowly tribal. The petition sent to the King by eighteen hundred civilised natives in 1937, asking to be saved from extinction and given political representation in Parliament, was the only articulate national plea they have yet made on their own behalf, ... Doubtless much of this apathy is due to the fact that the tribes never stood and fought the invaders in the resolute and able way of the Zulus and Maori. The Aborigines were never politically minded enough to speak of their 'rights', or to demand minimum conditions for the co-operation they undoubtedly did give, and still give, in the work of settlement. They never set up any real competition for the land of which they have been dispossessed without compensation. Not having any established villages or hamlets they could, and did, bend their frontal line whenever the whites came, and after flinging a few spears, co-operated in their own destruction by accepting a parasitic role which enabled them to live peaceably near the intruding whites.²⁹

The paradigm I have outlined above has been put far more elegantly by Cawte and Kidson:

In the initial phase, the reaction to the White settler was forthright and assertive, sometimes with opposition, sometimes with interest and friendliness. In the subsequent phase [there] ensued gross physical deterioration in response to sub-nutrition, introduced pathogens and disruption of habits of life. The disease and death rate in this phase was so high that the extinction of the race was threatened. In the third phase, the characteristic features were shyness, withdrawal and regression, with failure to become involved in White society.³⁰

Reynolds has sifted through the many words and papers that litter Australian history, all written incidentally by whites or non-Aborigines and has furiously extorted from the records, a catalogue of aboriginal hostilities towards white settlers which he interprets as a just and heroic war of resistance and liberation against the white settlers by the Aborigines which, of course, is not to be

²⁷ Edward M. Curr, *The Australian race: its origin, languages, customs, place of landing in Australia and the routes by which it spread itself over the continent*, J Ferres, Melbourne 1886-87, Vol 1. p 209.

²⁸ Bowen to Newcastle, Despatch 33 of 10 Apr 1860. [Q.S.A. GOV/22].

²⁹ WHITE MAN GOT NO DREAMING Essays 1938-1973 by W. E. H. Stanner, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1979 p 4.

³⁰ Cawte, J. E., and M. A. Kidson. "Ethnopsychiatry in Central Australia: ii. The Evolution of Illness in a Walbiri Lineage." *British Journal of Psychiatry* 3 (1965): 1079-85, p 1084.

found among the matters recorded.³¹ He has endowed the Aborigines, fighting this supposed war, as a national force with national aims and a national consensus, which is not supported by the empirical evidence either. As Dedge said:

Their existing in small, detached bodies, thereby spread out over a large extent of country, and divided from each other often by interests of a clashing and opposite character—together with the jealousies and animosities originated and fostered by wrongs and retaliations, the accumulations of many years—unite to restrict their acquaintance with each other within very contracted bounds, and totally prevent any extensive combination for purposes of aggression or defence. Hence it is that small companies of Europeans, under prudent management, have been enabled to traverse the open plains and deep forests of this hand, with their flocks and herds, without encountering insurmountable difficulties from large numbers of native blacks. Indeed, it seems difficult, on any other principle, to account for the very little, and comparatively harmless hostility which they have manifested towards the whites from time commencement of the colonization of their country.³²

Reynolds' claim of war is also made in the face of the fact that the colonial governments of the day did not declare war on the Aborigines, nor did they have a policy of eradication. Moreover, there is no record by or for the Aborigines that indicates or records any statement or declaration of war against the government or white settlers by the Aborigines. I don't wish to take this argument to absurd lengths, but one of the principles of *jus ad bellum* is that a just war has not only to be declared publicly, but also must be declared by the proper authority otherwise how does one distinguish war from murder and soldiers from criminals.

What is even more alarming, is that a school of historical study has grown up which has attracted the gruesome name of the Black Armband Brigade which specialises in defaming and pillorying the Native Police as a form of *Einsatzgruppen*,³³ which were sent out to clean up the countryside after settlement by squatters, planters, miners and sundry other dirt scratchers like the Chinese, tin scrapers and diggers. The above empirical evidence of the Aborigines' response to white settlement is not some heroic collective of armed resistance, so tiresomely portrayed by Reynolds with his mega-theory but the inevitable reaction of a people who never really understood the life changing events that were taking place about them. They were inhibited by their ignorance which they have never overcome.

The hypothesis of the Black Armband Brigade is that at the commencement of the occupation and settlement of Australia by the British, the indigenous natives endemic to Australia commenced a war of resistance that persisted for near on a hundred years. The autochthonous inhabitants of Australia are now known as Aborigines, a denomination suggestive of unity and homogeneity. However, when first contact was made with them, they were found to be living in great diversity with no concept of confederacy or unity and without a *lingua franca*. The Eurocentric need to classify the Australian aboriginal natives met with difficulties because of their confusing diversity. Their traits of national character not being subject to any known laws, admitted of the greatest variety of exceptions, and this made it difficult to acquire a true knowledge of the people, and explains, at the same time, the often-contradictory accounts given by observers in different parts of the Australian continent. However, it has been found that the most efficient system of classification is to adopt language taxonomy and at the time of initial European settlement, over 250 languages were spoken. A further surprising characteristic of the race as a whole was their entrenched enmity between neighbouring clans and an ever-ready willingness to kill strange Aborigines who might stray or trespass into their habitat.

³¹ *Forgotten War*, NewSouth Publishing, 2013.

³² Dedge p 14.

³³ Paramilitary death squads of Nazi Germany that were responsible for mass killings, primarily by shooting, during World War II (1939–45).

In the settlement of Australia by white pastoralist and others, many collisions occurred between Aborigines and whites. This raised in the eyes of the then colonial government of Australia a law and order issue. Governor Gipps was perhaps the first to put in place an even-handed policy of law enforcement on the frontier to keep the peace. At no stage did any of the colonial governments ever declare war on the Aborigines in a formal sense or in a covert sense either. The response of the government was, at the time, to recruit aboriginal natives as peace-officers. In other words, aboriginal natives who would serve as troopers in maintaining the peace and good order of the unsettled areas. A willingness to join the police, on the face it, would *prima facie* suggest that the Aborigines or some, at least, had wholeheartedly embraced the Crown and were willing to enter the service of the Crown in a peace-keeping role. Although there were no formal initiation ceremonies like taking an oath of allegiance, the Aborigines were trained in drill, horse riding, firearms, personal hygiene and the concept of discipline. This analysis is consistent with the behaviour of most Aborigines on settlement who never sought to overthrow the Crown but on entering the settler's economy became prone to transgressions within the economy just like some sections of the white community did:

there are some grounds on which an argument for the use of this force may be sustained. Under skill and proper management, the force may be extensively employed in the prevention of crime and the preservation of life. The black police system has done this for the aboriginal race — it has proved their capacity for discipline, and the strength of their attachment to those who rule them well. On many occasions the officers in command of these troopers have reported that their order, obedience, unflinching courage, and moderation in the hour of triumph, were such as would have done credit to Europeans. Their importance as semi-military defenders of the outlying population, and the place they thus attain in the history of British colonisation entitle them to a degree of consideration which general philanthropy alone would not secure them.³⁴

If you subscribe to the Black Armband hypothesis of war, then what status is to be accorded to those Aborigines who joined forces with the Crown and fought against the heroic Aboriginal resistance fighters who were waging a war of liberation. None of the leading exponents of the war hypothesis have dealt with this issue. They have buried their head in the sand or adopted what Stanner called the great silence. If there was a war, which I dispute, then the most effective operational force, for the whites, was the black troopers. They were led from behind by their white officers, which suggest the white officers actually did little killing compared to the troopers' tactics of shock and awe.³⁵

If it was a war, then the language of war would be appropriate. The native troopers, therefore, can only be seen as collaborators and since they took their uniforms off to do battle, maybe they were even worse than collaborators - traitors. Thus, the settlement of Australia was not unanimously resisted by the aboriginal natives of Australia but was supported and assisted by a section who voluntarily enlisted in the defence of white settlement. Some did, indeed, give their life for their Queen and Country. Reynolds has argued for the acknowledgement of Aborigines in the War Memorial, Canberra as resistance fighters against colonisation. The real heroes are the native troopers of the Queensland Native Police who should be recognised for their service to the Crown in right of the colony of Queensland as soldiers of the Queen. If Aborigines were killed indiscriminately and without lawful excuse by the Native Police, which is the overwhelming hypothesis of the Black Armband Brigade, then the Black Armband Brigade need to account for this fact and how aboriginal native police are to be accorded a role in the crimes against humanity that are levelled at white settlers. Is an Aborigine who was a member of the Queensland Native

³⁴ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 22 September 1864 p 4.

³⁵ Henry G Lamond, Native Mounted Police, Walkabout, Vol. 15 No. 11, 1 November 1949 p 32.

Police by virtue of the Nuremberg Principles as guilty as the whites and how is his allegiance to the whites together with his alleged violence against Aborigines reconciled with the conduct of his brother Aborigines against the whites, which is so often characterised in apologist's literature as a just war?³⁶

Governor Darling created what was known as the 'limits of location', which allowed settlers to take up land within the 'limits'. A Government Order on 14 October 1829 increased this area of approved settlement to include an area called the Nineteen Counties. The demand for grazing land was ongoing. In 1833, 'an Act for protecting the Crown Lands of the Colony from Encroachment, Intrusion and Trespass' was passed. This Act was nugatory in effect and the squatters continued their never-ending expansion. Governor Bourke sought to legalise and regulate squatting through further legislation in 1836. The regulations consequent to the 1836 Act included issuing licences to settlers to depasture their stock on vacant Crown lands beyond the limits of location, on application to the Colonial Secretary. The 1836 Act also provided for the appointment of full-time Commissioners of Crown Lands to the districts beyond the limits of location. The Commissioners were required to report on the inspections they carried out in their land district.

In a despatch to Lord Glenelg dated 20 February 1839, Governor Gipps advised:

in consequence of the numerous depredations which have of late been committed by the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, on the flocks and herds of the colonists depastured beyond the settled limits of the colony, and of the atrocities which in return have been committed on the aborigines by the shepherds and stockmen in charge of those flocks and herds, I have deemed it proper to call an extraordinary meeting of the Legislative Council, 14 February 1839, for the purpose of submitting to it a Bill for the establishment of a police force in those distant districts.³⁷

At the Legislative Council meeting of 14 February 1839, Gipps said as follows:

numbers of persons of all classes now engaged in depasturing sheep and cattle beyond what are called the boundaries of location, might be sufficient of themselves to call for the protection of a police force; but the necessity for it is rendered far more urgent by the frequent aggressions made of late by the aboriginal natives upon the flocks and herds of the colonists, as well as on the lives of their stockmen, by the outrages which have been committed on the aborigines as well as by them; and particularly by one atrocious deed of blood, for which seven unhappy men have suffered on the scaffold. ... and by providing that each commissioner shall be accompanied by a moving police force sufficient to repress the predatory attacks of the natives, and to keep order amongst all classes.³⁸

After the enactment of the *Act to restrain the unauthorized Occupation of Crown Lands and to provide the means of defraying the Expense of a Border Police* [2 Vict. No. 27] on 22 March 1839, Governor Gipps published a notice on the Aborigines, dated 21 May 1839. This notice said inter alia:

... as subjects of the Queen, whose authority extends over every part of New Holland—the natives of the colony have an equal right with the people of European origin to the protection and assistance of the law of England. To allow either to injure or oppress the other, or to permit the stronger to regard the weaker party as aliens with whom a war can exist, and against whom they may exercise belligerent rights, is not less inconsistent with the spirit of that law, than it is at variance with the dictates of justice and humanity.³⁹

³⁶ Reynolds, Henry, *With the White People*, Penguin Books, 1990.

³⁷ ABORIGINES (Australian Colonies), Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 9 August 1844, p 1.

³⁸ Ibid., p 1.

³⁹ Ibid., p 21. See Appendix A for the full document.

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This notice must be taken as a statement of intent by the then Governor of the colony of NSW on how Aborigines were to be dealt with according to the laws of NSW and must be seen as the foundation statement and legal basis on which Gipps and all subsequent Governors acted in dealing with Aborigines on a law enforcement basis and is the foundation stone of the corps of Native Police, including the subsequent colony of Queensland.⁴⁰ This notice does not contain a declaration of war on the Aborigines nor does it permit acts of aggression and or violence against Aborigines by whites, quite the opposite. On 21 March 1844, Governor Sir George Gipps wrote to Lord Stanley as follows:

This expenditure is, however, exclusive of that which is occasioned by the maintenance of the border police, one-half of which is usually considered to be incurred on account of the aborigines. It is exclusive also of the expense of a "native police," composed altogether of aborigines, which I now beg leave for the first time to bring under your Lordship's observation. It has long been customary in this colony to resort to the assistance of the aborigines in tracking offenders (bushrangers as they are commonly called); and for some years past, I have endeavoured permanently to attach two or three aboriginal natives to each party of the border police, as well as to the more regular force, called the "mounted police;" but it is only in the Port Phillip district that a corps consisting entirely of aboriginals has been established. The first attempt at the formation of such a corps was made in 1836 or 1837, soon after the opening of Port Phillip, under an officer of the name of De Villiers, but it led to no satisfactory result, and the project was abandoned, or rather remained in abeyance, until the beginning of 1842, when Mr. La Trobe revived it, and placed at the head of the establishment a gentleman named Dana (an Englishman), by whom the experiment has been very satisfactorily conducted. The establishment of the "native police," distinct either from the mounted or border police, first appeared on the Port Phillip estimates for the year 1843...⁴¹

The Port Phillip Native Police were seen as a successful and efficient peace-keeping force in the settlement of the Port Phillip district up until the untimely death of Henry Dana, Commandant of the force on 24 November 1852. C. J. La Trobe wrote to the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies on 22 January 1853 seeking a gratuity for Dana's children as a result of his death, and in the course of which, La Trobe gave a fair assessment of the effectiveness of the Native Police:

7. ... a corps of native police was gradually embodied, disciplined, and maintained under his (Dana's) sole management, which was acknowledged on all hands to have fully answered the main purposes for which it was organized, and to have rendered the most important service to the colony in the position in which it was then placed. It at once formed a link between the native and the European, and gave many opportunities for the establishment of friendly relations. The marked success which, in numerous instances, followed its employment gave confidence to the settler, removed the pretexts under which he would feel justified in taking redress into his own hands, and left no excuse for the vindictive reprisals which have been a blot upon the early years of the settlement. The native, on his side, soon saw that in yielding to his natural aggressive impulses he would be opposed to those who were not only his equals in savage cunning and endowment, but his superiors by alliance with the Europeans.

8. Such was the general result of the experiment till within two years of the present time, when, with the cessation of the urgent necessity which had called it into existence, the native police was seen to be evidently on the decline. It had, in a great measure, attained the objects of its organization, and had outlived its time. Almost the entire number of the original members had died from accident or disease. The natural decay in numbers of the tribes in the colony, and their change of habits and character, particularly among the young, and many other causes, rendered the possibility of its further continuance by any exertion very questionable;⁴²

⁴⁰ See Wik case, [1996] HCA 40, Toohey J: 139. The Act [The Crown Lands Unauthorized Occupation Act 1839 (NSW)] ... The protective reference to persons "being upon Crown Lands" was clearly wide enough to include Aborigines. Also, Kirby J: 535. ... That Act clearly contemplated Aborigines "being upon" Crown lands.

⁴¹ Ibid., p 286.

⁴² Bride 1898, p 267.

On 12 August 1848, Sir Charles Fitz Roy advised Earl Grey as follows:

... and at page 85 a copy of a Message transmitting to the Council an Estimate amounting to £1,000, for the formation of a small Corps of Native Police beyond the Settled Districts. I have reason to believe that the establishment of this force will not only have the effect of checking the collisions between the white Inhabitants and the Aborigines, referred to in the Message, and which in some instances have had very deplorable results; but I am also sanguine in the hope that it may prove one of the most efficient means of attempting to introduce more civilized habits among the native tribes.⁴³

As a result, on 4 August 1848 the Governor appointed Frederick Walker, Esquire, to be a Magistrate of the Territory and its Dependencies and on 17 August 1848, Commandant of the Corps of Native Police, to be employed beyond the Settled Districts in the Sydney District, which in effect was the Clarence River, Darling Downs and beyond the district of Wellington. The Native Police under the command of Walker operated within an area known as the Moreton Bay Settlement (Southeast Queensland) with great success. For a full and complete disclosure of the Native Police under the command of Frederick Walker the reader is invited to take up the definitive work known as *Frederick Walker: Commandant of the Native Police*.⁴⁴



⁴³ HRA 1 xxvi p 559.

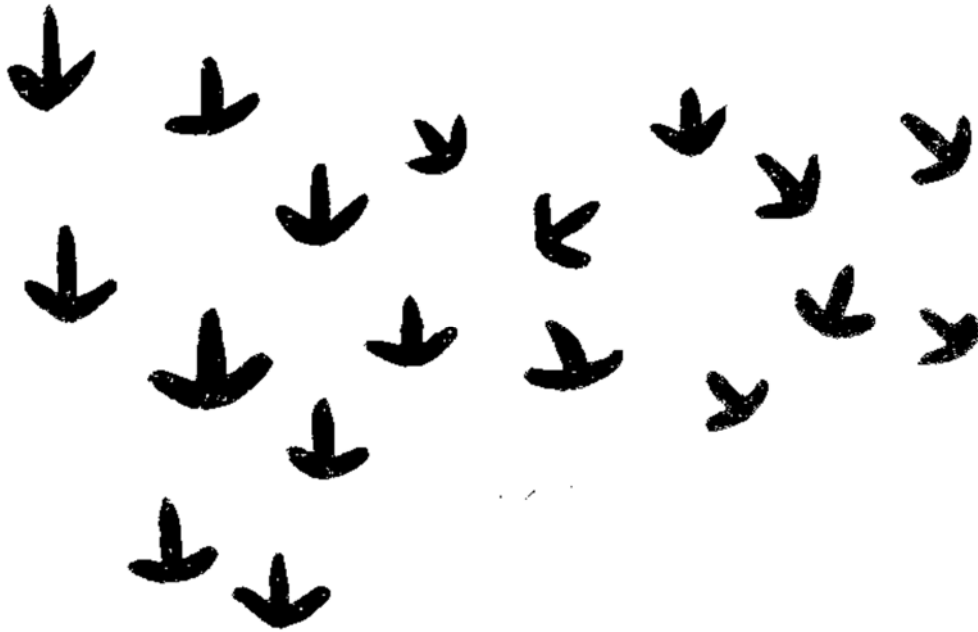
⁴⁴ Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane, 2018.



Courtesy of QSL

Edric Norfolk Vaux Morisset
Commandant of Native Police 1857 to 1861

Chapter 1 — In All but Name



1855

is as good a time as any to start this account of the history of the Queensland Native Police for it was in some respects, a memorable one in the history of Moreton Bay. Dundalli had been hanged by the neck until he was dead, the last public execution in

Queensland. Mr Frederick Walker⁴⁵ had been dismissed but in circumstances that did not fit the expectations of an *auto-da-fé*. Mr Walker had turned up at the inquiry into his management of the native police in his cups, though his doctor had certified that he had the Joe Blakes. The Board of Inquiry was so taken aback, they simply recommended his dismissal and the Governor immediately saw the sense of such a proposition and summarily dismissed Walker. On 9 February 1855, Richard Purvis Marshall Esq was appointed Commandant of the Native Police in the room of Frederick Walker Esq by Sir William Denison, His Excellency the Governor General.⁴⁶ Sir William Denison, who had been Governor of Tasmania, landed in Sydney in January 1855, to take the place of Sir Charles Fitz Roy, who had been recalled. Sir Charles left Sydney by the *Madras* on 28 January 1855. The Legislative Council was opened by Sir William Denison, on 5 June 1855.

Mr Charles Cowper MLC, county of Durham, lost no time in moving that a copy of the Report of the Board of Inquiry, held at Moreton Bay, with reference to Frederick Walker and the Native Police Force and of all correspondence and documents relating thereto be laid upon the table of this House. This was agreed to after Cowper had expressed his dissatisfaction with the gross

⁴⁵ FREDERICK WALKER: Commandant of the Native Police by Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane, 2018.

⁴⁶ NSW Government Gazette 13 February 1855 N° 26 p 365.

mismanagement and wholesale swindling and complaints that had been made against Walker. The documents were tabled by the Colonial Secretary in the Legislative Council on 5 December 1855.

On 5 July 1855 in the Legislative Council, message 35 from Denison was read concerning the estimates for 1855-6; the following is an extract dealing with the Native Police:

The arrangements under which the Native Police have hitherto acted are by no means satisfactory. The distances which separate the scattered detachments of this force from each other and from headquarters are such as to prohibit altogether any proper superintendence on the part of the nominal Commandant; and the Government is, consequently, hardly ever in possession of satisfactory information with regard to the strength, distribution or efficiency of the different parties. It has therefore been thought desirable to bring the whole force under the direct control of the Inspector General of Police (Captain William Mayne), and to alter so far, the organisation of the body as to admit of direct reference from each detachment to the head of the department, who will thus become the responsible head of all the Police of the colony. The arrangement as proposed will be productive of some economy, inasmuch as some reduction in the strength of the different detachments will be possible.⁴⁷

In keeping with Denison's policy, the following estimated were carried in the Legislative Council:

Estimate for the Native Police Establishment in the Northern Districts 1855

Location	Lieutenant	Sub Lieutenant	Serjeant	Trooper
Port Curtis & Leichhardt	2	2	2	24
Burnett & Wide Bay	2	2	2	24
Lower Condamine & Maranoa	2		1	12 = 60
Clarence & Macleay		2	1	12

The Inspector-General of Police, Captain William Mayne also advised that there was no commandant as the native police were now under his control.⁴⁸ Captain Mayne also advised that the Native Police Corps had been remade in strict accordance with the opinion expressed by the Legislature, to the effect that the corps should be employed only in protecting the white population against the aggressions of Aborigines on the extreme limits of civilization, and that the reduced strength of the corps did not leave any part expressly disposable for the Brisbane district.⁴⁹ Thus government policy had restructured the Native Police to a force of 72 troopers of which 60 were deployed in the greater Moreton Bay area. The position of Commandant had been abolished, effectively demoting R P Marshall to a Lieutenant⁵⁰ and the force was restricted to an operational area described as the extreme limits of civilisation. Moreover, the six troopers of Native Police under the command of a Sergeant who were to be stationed in Brisbane were withdrawn.⁵¹ This left Bald Hills, Pine River and Sandgate unprotected. The effect of this was to expose these areas to marauding blacks; the arch villain Dundalli⁵² was from the northern shores of the bay. Mr Griffin at Whiteside Station, Pine Creek had suffered loss of cattle by blacks. They constructed a system of barricades in the dry bed of a creek, into which they drove the cattle, spearing them, and leaving

⁴⁷ SMH 6 July 1855 p 3.

⁴⁸ SMH 11 October 1855 p 5.

⁴⁹ SMH 11 October 1855 p 4.

⁵⁰ Lt Marshall, Traylan was advised by letter 31 August 1855 from Mayne that the office of commandant had ceased. QSA ID 14725 Part 1 p 21.

⁵¹ MBC 28 July 1855 p 3.

⁵² It is said he was from the Dalambarra clan, Blackall Range.

the remainder of the carcasses to rot, after they had helped themselves to what meat they wanted. Furthermore, it retarded the purchase of land at Sandgate for settlement and improvement.⁵³

Moreover, the government delivered another blow to the squatters in clearing Frederick Walker of any defalcations or abuse of public money when the following was announced in the Council:

The Attorney-General said the Commandant discharged his duties satisfactorily up to a certain time, when he fell off from the path of propriety by giving way to drinking habits. He appeared on two days in a state of intoxication before the Board of Enquiry, who of course recommended his dismissal. He was afterwards apprehended on the charge of embezzlement, but the evidence on which the warrant was issued was proved to be incorrect.

The Auditor-General said there had been no irregularity in reference to the accounts of the Commandant with the Government. He did however send in his claims for 1s. 9d. per ration for his troopers, when he was paying 1s. 11d. There were therefore some outstanding accounts against him. This inattention was of course blameable. He was now giving his assistance in setting the accounts straight. When the whole matter was settled, a report could be brought up. Mr. Walker was not one of those who gave any security.⁵⁴

These statements provoked the arch enemies of Walker to once again resort to letter writing. W Forster:

... and of a body of native police who have been until very recently little better than a nuisance to the settlers they were sent to protect, from their having been placed under the orders of a commandant, virtually irresponsible from peculiar circumstances, and who, though at times absolutely a maniac and continually incompetent from drunkenness, was yet, in spite of the repeated remonstrances of the parties aggrieved, maintained for years in office by the Sydney Government and Legislature.⁵⁵

If exonerating Frederick Walker wasn't enough, Governor Denison levied a new tax on the squatters beyond the settled districts when he introduced the Live Stock Assessment Bill which proposed an additional tax, on top of the £10 licence fee, of ½d. per head on sheep and 3d. per head on horned cattle and horses depasturing beyond the boundaries.⁵⁶

The removal of the arch enemies of the aboriginal natives, Fitz Roy and F Walker, seemed to have no calming effect on their actions and intentions. Continued marauding by blacks remained a feature of the frontier, for on 20 September 1855, WH Wiseman, Commissioner for Crown Lands, Leichhardt district wrote to the Chief Commissioner, Sydney as follows:

... met Mr Marshall, late Commandant of Native Police, on his way to Traylan accompanied by about 20 of the best disciplined Native Police who are about to be dismissed. Made requisition to retain four Troopers, horses, equipment etc on behalf of Government. Took this step as afraid not to be able to procure any at later period. Now feel more anxious than ever for change as it is the general opinion of all Squatters that withdrawal of Native Troopers will be soon followed by outrages by Natives along Dawson and on heads of the Auburn and Burnett. Scarcely feel prepared to take up proper position should I be visited whilst encamping in bush by concourse of wild natives accompanied as I am now by only one almost useless white man and a blackboy who does not yet know the use of his arms.⁵⁷

⁵³ MBC 29 September 1855 p 2.

⁵⁴ SMH 11 October 1855 p 5.

⁵⁵ SMH 4 October 1855 p 3.

⁵⁶ *Assessment on Stock Act 1855 (NSW)*.

⁵⁷ SLQ Colonial Secretary's letters received relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland 1822-1860, A2.34 p 249.

Then on 23 September 1855, the Aborigines attacked the Rannes Native Police camp killing two troopers and dangerously wounding all others except one, leaving him the only man fit for duty. RG Walker, officer in command, further advised that the station was in a precarious state and he urgently required assistance.⁵⁸ On 8 October 1855, Walker advised the Commandant of Police that:

... large numbers of Aborigines are still hovering round this station and that it will require my constant attention to prevent depredations. I have just returned from patrol and pursuit of the murderers of the troopers. Mr Murray having taken charge of the immediate neighbourhood and having also pursued the blacks who had taken forcible possession of the station and were prevented from murdering the inhabitants by the timely arrival of the troopers of the Native Police. The wounded troopers are all, except Combo James, nearly quite well; but in his case I have not the slightest hope of recovery. The spear having entered his lungs. Of the eight carbines formerly at the station, four and the ramrod of the fifth have been taken by the blacks. I should feel much obliged if I could be immediately furnished with four; also, three pistols and three cartridge pouches.⁵⁹

In response to this outrage at Rannes Station, which was operated by Messrs Leith Hay, a letter dated 17 October 1855 was sent to the private secretary of Denison from various stockholders in the district:

1. On morning of 23 September last Blacks numbering about 200 fighting men surprised and attacked Native Police stationed here, while asleep, murdering two of them & severely wounding the rest.
2. Blacks extremely numerous in this District and about 500 fighting men within 30 miles of this station at time murders committed.
3. Owing to large tracts of creeks intersecting different runs, warlike disposition of Blacks and long distance intervening different Stations, shepherds and stock in imminent danger.
4. Blacks by whom deed was perpetrated from districts of Burnett, Upper Dawson and Port Curtis, aided by large tribes from Northward and Westward where extremely numerous.
5. Trust that larger force than that allotted to Leichhardt District may be allowed for protection of Stockholders, owing to great distances that intervene between Upper Dawson and this portion of District, at least 160 miles of unoccupied Country but not less than 24 men are absolutely necessary for protection of two occupied portions of District.
6. As 100 miles of unoccupied Country intervenes between here and Port Curtis, it will be obvious that force stationed there cannot co-operate with that here.
7. If sufficient protection not granted, there will be much bloodshed. Stockholders intending to occupy new runs will be deterred and those residing in this portion will have constant murders and depredations committed on Stations and may have to retreat with stock to settled districts.
8. Native Police in every District kept Blacks in subordination, this unprecedented attack too clearly shows hostile intentions of tribes in this and surrounding districts, relationships and intimacy which exist amongst tribes at great distances from each other, enable them to muster in great numbers and become much more formidable than in almost any district when first occupied.
9. We trust His Excellency will give above statement consideration and the urgency of the case is such that we have been induced to apply direct to head of Government for protection without which Stockholders of this portion of District will be compelled for preservation of sacrifice of human life, for maintenance of Runs and safety of stock to take up arms in own defence.⁶⁰

This letter was significant in that it not only gave Governor Denison a realistic assessment of the Leichhardt frontier but it also revealed an accurate description of the Aborigines as they then existed on that frontier. The squatters in the Port Curtis and Leichhardt districts had been warning the Governor and the government in Sydney that these districts were occupied by hostile tribes of

⁵⁸ SLQ Colonial Secretary's letters received relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland 1822-1860, A2.34 p 359.

⁵⁹ QSA ID 86145 p 83.

⁶⁰ SLQ Colonial Secretary's letters received relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland 1822-1860, A2.34 p 282.

natives and that if stockholders were to take up this country to depasture sheep and cattle, they needed protection, an adequate force of Native Police. Denison had laid down the policy as stated in his financial minute No 35 above and the Inspector General of Police, Mayne had carried out the instructions without question even though he had been advised by the man on the spot, Commissioner Wiseman, that there was a need for extra Native Police.⁶¹ The government's response to the letter of 17 October 1855 above was to say, via Mayne that the Council had voted on the structure of the Native Police and no more police would be allocated to the Port Curtis and Leichhardt districts than what the Council had allowed. In regards RG Walker of the Rannes detachment of Native Police, he fared rather badly; Mayne wrote to Lt Murray, officer in charge, Gladstone on 5 December 1855, setting out Walker's errors and oversights that led to the attack and murder of Native Police at Rannes on 23 September 1855:

Allowing Aborigines to congregate in numbers reported in immediate vicinity of Camp and Station. I recognize propriety and humanity of endeavouring to civilize Aborigines by admitting them individually, in small numbers, about Stations, but experience taught me when congregated in large numbers, from necessity or caprice, as regards food, and from confidence and audacity which great numerical superiority begets, Blacks plan and commit depredations on property and acts of violence on settlers and servants. Assemblages near camps or Stations should be prevented.

From Deposition of Mr Kelly, I learn that, though large number of Blacks who collected at Rannes for some time previous to 23 September, had been treated with great kindness, receiving large quantity of food, they had notwithstanding stolen 70 to 80 sheep. I have to observe that allowing Aborigines after this was known to remain would inevitably produce in their minds feeling reverse of respect for those who submitted to such attacks and for Police who should have checked such acts and would encourage them to further aggression and violence. On discovery of first depredation, Aborigines should have been driven from Station and compelled to disperse; temporising or slightest want of firmness and decision (quite compatible with humanity and tenderness) grave errors in dealings with Savages.

Being in camp at Rannes and, therefore, more liable to surprise than if in close Barracks, there was greater necessity for vigilance on part of Police, but, appears, though seven Troopers at Camp on night of attack, there was such absence of caution and vigilance, that some Blacks were enabled to steal into it and remove carbines and pistols and were enabled to rush upon troopers and spear them as they left; this, I'm compelled to observe, displays want of caution and vigilance which calls for marked animadversion and reprehension while allowing Blacks under circumstances to camp on same side of creek as Police (brought to my notice by Mr Marshall) exhibits want of prudence and discretion which I must censure.

You will communicate this to 2nd Lieutenant Walker and impress on him necessity of exercising greater caution, vigilance, prudence and discretion than appears to have been done in this instance. Feeling of animosity on part of Aborigines in Districts where Native Police Corps employed engendered by troopers carrying on intercourse with Gins, and consequently reason to suppose attack at Rannes resulted from this feeling. Call for your full report on this subject which you will forward having communicated with 2nd Lieutenant Walker and received his report to be transmitted with your own.⁶²

The reader may wish to pause here and consider this incident from the Aboriginal perspective. Difficult to do, but Aborigines were actors in the above events and it is said they should be given a voice. There are no aboriginal sources available other than their course of conduct.⁶³ The black armband brigade would see the above conduct of the Aborigines as objecting to and the forcible eviction of the whites from their country. The difficulty in resorting to violence to register one's objection or displeasure with another party's actions or omissions is that it is likely to provoke a

⁶¹ SLQ Colonial Secretary's letters received relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland 1822-1860, A2.34 p 61 and 62.

⁶² SLQ Colonial Secretary's letters received relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland 1822-1860, A2.34 p 351. Moreover, the report about Gins is unavailable or never compiled.

⁶³ A pattern of behaviour evidencing an intention to achieve a certain result; or "a pattern of conduct composed of two or more acts, evidencing a continuity of purpose."

violent reaction. So, I ask why did the Aborigines not firstly, parley and negotiate with RG Walker? Why the Aborigines behaved so badly on 23 September 1855 is really unknown. It could have been any manner of trespass or insult to their code of conduct and etiquette that offended and provoked them to murder the troopers rather than a continuation of a “war of liberation from colonial rule,” the black armband hypothesis. The presence of the white man and his livestock may have been seen as a blessing in the form of additional food and goods but his bringing into their territory foreign or strange blacks in the form of troopers, who may have been repugnant or offensive to the local black group or tribe, could have provoked the local Aborigines; and it may have been these strange blacks who were stealing the local females. After all, it was the troopers who were killed together with the usual sheep stealing. Of course, Captain Mayne’s view was that it was a failure of the Native Police to be prepared and vigilant against the Blacks. A simple break down in police operational procedures nothing to do with political overtones of aboriginal resistance.



4. Wreath, 1855.

1856

Whatever the reason, black violence erupted once again on the Port Curtis stations. Evidenced by William Young's, Mount Larcom, Gladstone 9 April 1856 statement:

On 26 December 1855, I sent into Mr Murray to come out to my station as the Blacks had stolen about ninety sheep. I saw him at Stowe, he sent out to my station three native policemen and told me that in three days he would be out himself and bring some more police with him. The day after seeing Mr Murray, I arrived on the station when Toby, one of the native police, told me that he had sent for the Blacks. They came about sundown. Shortly after, the three native police fired at them. I don't think any of them were shot. Next day, Mr Murray arrived on the station and on the following day he went out on the Run but did not see any Blacks. He then went home leaving me two or three policemen to protect the station while I was taking my wool down to Stowe and as soon as I got it all down, I was to send them into the Barracks. During the time Mr Murray's police were on my station, Mr RG Walker came and saw a blackfellow that was concerned in the murder of the native police at Rannes.

On my return home, I was informed by a servant of mine, now dead that Mr Walker ordered the police to shot him. About ten days after a man in my employment was drowned in the creek, I went into Gladstone to report his death. On the road returning home to my station, I met a blackboy of mine who informed me that the Blacks had attacked the station and he believed all the people were murdered.

I immediately returned to Gladstone and informed Mr Murray of what I had heard. In the course of an hour, we started for the station with the Native Police and arrived early the next morning when we saw five dead bodies viz three men, one woman and a blackboy, all of them I knew. They were employed by me. They had been murdered by the Blacks. I believe the reason that the unfortunate people were murdered was in consequence of the Blacks having been fired upon and the blackfellow being shot at the same time. The Blacks were the aggressors. They had no right to take by force from my shepherds ninety of my sheep. They stole fifty at first, a few days after three came to the station. I told them I should forgive them this time but if they ever did the like again, I should send for the Native Police to punish them. In about a week after, they took forty more sheep from my shepherds I then sent for Mr Murray.⁶⁴

William Young's station at Mt. Larcom, was situated some seventy miles easterly from Rannes and about fourteen miles direct from Gladstone. All the inhabitants except an Aboriginal boy were killed. This was clearly a massacre of white settlers and their helpers by Aborigines. Their names were George Smelt, John Murray, James Foran, Margaret Foran, and Peter Blackboy. A number of sheep were also driven off. The store was broken open and a quantity of cloth, flour and sugar, and other articles were missing. The bodies of the dead were mutilated, being covered with spear and nullah nullah wounds. The body of Margaret Foran appeared to have been violated even after life had left it.⁶⁵ The modus operandi of this attack is suggestive of banditry; the plundering of goods and killing civilians. One could hardly characterise this as an act of resistance.

Mr Murray of the Native Police with five troopers and District Constable Horrigan went in pursuit of the Aborigines.

His party came up with the Aborigines twice. ... During the two collisions as reported by Murray, eleven of the Aborigines who had participated in the murders at Young's were shot by the police and three others were severely if not mortally wounded. Part of the clothing, books, pipes, and other

⁶⁴ SLQ Colonial Secretary's letters received relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland 1822-1860, A2.48 p 4.

⁶⁵ L E Skinner, *Police of the Pastoral Frontier*, University of Queensland Press, 1975 p 209.

articles stolen from the store, also portions of women's dresses, handkerchiefs, and other property were found in the camps and on the trail of the Aborigines.⁶⁶

Murray stated it was difficult to find out the reasons for the Aborigines attacking Young's station. There were other circumstances besides being fired at by police; like whites quarrelling with the blacks, Young kicking and threatening a black with a gun, over working the Aborigines at shearing time and then driving them off the station.⁶⁷ All wrongs worthy of payback by the Aborigines. Then there was the weak and undefended state of Young's station. Moreover, Murray had been assisted by Harold of the Gracemere tribe, as Wiseman called them, against the other marauding tribes. Contemporaneous with the above incidents, William Powell, who had taken up a 16,000 acre Run, Walooga, in the district of Wide Bay and Burnett, was on 25 April 1855 attacked by a number of Aborigines who robbed the store, bound his son, and left his hutkeeper for dead. Since that time Aborigines had taken a number of Powell's sheep and had also sent Powell word by other Aborigines that they intended to come to Walooga after the bunya season and take the whole of the sheep and stores, and murder Powell and his men.⁶⁸ As I said above, Mr Reynolds has postulated a macro-theory of war, a unified indigenous front of armed conflict against the invading settlers. When, in fact, the empirical evidence suggests there were a multitude of reasons for the violence of the Aborigines towards the whites, many motives, all dependent on the quality of the interaction between the Aborigines and the white settlers with a further dimension of the whites, settlers or police, being aided and abetted by friendly tribes against marauding tribes. Once again, on or about 22 January 1856 between ten and eleven o'clock at night, at least one hundred Aborigines attacked the station of Messrs Elliott, only three miles distant from Archer's home station of Gracemere,⁶⁹ as there were twenty well-armed white men, the Aborigines were finally repulsed. Elliott, who had been speared in several places, was taken to Gladstone for medical treatment for his wounds and one shepherd was killed. The reason for this attack was said to be quarrelling with the local tribe.⁷⁰

All these attacks had been brought to the attention of Denison together with settler petitions and delegations, all with the hope of an improved and more effective Native Police force. It seems the government's response to this was as follows:

Colonial Secretary to Inspector General of Police, 25 June 1856.

... to inquire into and report upon, the present distribution of the different forces of Police, Orderlies, and Patrols, and upon the present arrangement with reference to the duties of Police Magistrates, Commissioners of Gold Fields, Commissioners of Crown Lands, and Superintendents of Roads Patrol, with the view of suggesting improvements in the present system, and, if possible, of reducing the expenditure.

Board of Inquiry to Colonial Secretary, 26 July 1856.

With regard to the corps of Native Police in the Northern Districts, we are not prepared to recommend any immediate change. Its nature precludes amalgamation with the other police, and so in fact do its uses. These are of a character which may be styled extraordinary, being suited to exigencies incident to the first settlement of the country. We think it desirable that the occupation of the country should proceed, and that legal protection should be abreast of it. Not that this can authorize the Government to sanction the wild enterprise which inclines some to push their stock far beyond others into the midst of hostile tribes. What we mean is, that the Government should be guided in the opening of a new district by the number and character of the applications of those

⁶⁶ Ibid., p 210.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p 212.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p 220.

⁶⁹ Gracemere, Queensland, 4702.

⁷⁰ Skinner, 1975 p 214.

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interested, so as by no means to repress the energies of the younger settlers; and that once a new district is opened, the protection of law ought to be afforded to it. From the peculiarity of the nature of the new country to the northward, intersected as it is by dense scrubs, giving great advantage to the Aborigines when ill-disposed towards the settlers, there seems to be a necessity for keeping up this corps. It would probably be impracticable to maintain a police force of a more regular kind, adequate to the maintenance of proper relations with the indigenous tribes; while at the same time we know that the native troopers will not answer in conjunction with Europeans, except under them as their officers. Southern Native Police to be discontinued.⁷¹

Based on this recommendation, it appeared the police board of inquiry could see no need to change the government's policy of opening up new country and in turn providing law and order in the newly settled areas of the colony, while acknowledging some Aborigines were ill-disposed to the settlers. There was no talk of warfare and the need to introduce a military force or, on the other hand, to conciliate the affected tribes. It seemed business was to be as usual; recalcitrant tribesmen would be dealt with, if and when they misbehaved, which on the face of it, was killing and stealing livestock and plundering station stores and provisions, good old-fashioned criminal activities hardly resistance: "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition" stuff.

On 29 October 1856, Mr Gordon Sandeman presented to the NSW Legislative Assembly a petition praying provision for the protection of the district of Maranoa from depredations by Aborigines:

That, during the last twelve months, the destruction of cattle has been even far greater than in previous years, and such that, if it were to continue, must eventually oblige the settlers to abandon their runs altogether.

That the native police force stationed at Wandai Gumbal, near the eastern boundary of this district, is quite inadequate to protect any portion thereof, except that part situate to the eastward of Surat, which, although of considerable extent, includes, comparatively speaking, but a small portion of the district.

That your petitioners therefore respectfully suggest, that the most efficient protection would be a mounted patrol of white men, whose number need not exceed five, with two blacks to act as guides, whose duty would consist in patrolling the district west of Surat, on the Balonne, Moonie, Weir, and Barwon rivers, and who would be employed in the prevention rather than in punishing depredations.⁷²

Then on 8 November 1856, a select committee of the Legislative Assembly was appointed "to inquire into the present state of the Native Police force employed in the colony, with a view to the improvement of its organisation and management." Ultimately, the select committee recommended the reorganisation of the force. Their major recommendation was that 120 troopers should be appointed for service in the Northern Districts. No mention was made about the Aborigines other than "... previously to the Native Police Force being introduced into the Northern Districts of the Colony, the outrages committed by the blacks in the outlying districts were of frequent occurrence, extending to murder as well as to the destruction of stock to a great extent. That body after its introduction into the troubled districts, effected a great amount of good in checking the lawless state of outrage on the part of the native blacks that had previously existed."

And further:

On the whole, your Committee are prepared to state to your Honourable House, as the result of all the investigation they have been able to bring to bear upon the important subject before them,

⁷¹ www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/hansard/Documents/HHP/Pre1991/Votes/Papers/Sessional p 1152.

⁷² The above is an abridged quote; SMH 17 November 1856 p 2.

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and after the most mature consideration: That throughout the whole mass of Evidence adduced there does not appear the least ground to question, or even to indicate, a doubt of the capabilities and adaptation of the Native Police Force for the duties for which that body was originally raised; but, on the contrary, that, under proper provisions and judicious management and direction, such a Force is admirably adapted to protect life and property, and materially to assist the progress of the settler in the unsettled frontier districts.⁷³

The overwhelming assumption behind the questioning by the committee was that the squatters held proprietary rights to the country while the Aborigines were considered troublesome. There was no inquiry into why the aboriginal natives were troublesome but rather how to make the Native Police more effective in reducing the disruptive behaviour of the Aborigines.

On 28 October 1856, John McLerie, JP, became Inspector General of Police. He recommended to government that the command of the Native Police should be transferred to the Government Resident, Wickham, at Brisbane which took effect 1 December 1856.⁷⁴ On taking command of the Native Police, Wickham⁷⁵ conducted an audit of the strength of the force as at 31 December 1856 and found the following:

Location	Lieutenant	Sub Lieutenant	Trooper	Total
Gladstone	1		2	3
Rannes	1 2 nd Lt		1	2
Upper Dawson		1	6	7
Fitzroy		1	2	3
Wide Bay	1	1	15	17
Burnett District		1	6	7
Wandai Gumbal	1	1	12	14
Richmond River	1		6	7
Macleay River		1	6	7
Totals	5	6	56	67



⁷³ 1857 New South Wales. Legislative Assembly, Report from the Select Committee on the Native Police Force.

⁷⁴ Wickham to Lt Morisset, 25 November 1856, QSA Series ID 14725/86134 Part I, p 11.

⁷⁵ QSA Series ID 14725/86134, Part 1 p 6.

1857

February 18, the NSW Legislative Assembly went into a committee of supply, and Mr. Donaldson proposed the committee should take the Governor-General's amended estimate for the pay of the Native Police Force for 1857 arising out of the report of the select committee on the subject. In the new estimate the expense for the Northern force was put down at £15,891 7s. 6d. Mr Donaldson therefore proposed that the sum be granted to meet the expense of the native police for 1857, as follows:

Proposed Distribution of Native Police

Location	Lieutenant	2 nd Lieutenant	Camp Serjeant	Trooper
Port Curtis		1	1	12
Leichhardt & Upper Dawson	1	5	4	48
Wide Bay & Burnett	1	1	1	18
Maranoa, Lower Condamine, Darling Downs	1	2	2	21
Moreton		1	1	8
Clarence & Macleay		1	1	10
Total	3	11	10	117
Headquarters	Commandant	Secretary/Clerk	4 Cadets	

From the above it can be seen that the government put much emphasis on the Leichhardt and Upper Dawson district with 48 troopers to be stationed in the district. The area was seen as a hotspot for depredations by hostile Aborigines. This foresight seemed a sound response to a dangerous situation identified by the 1857 Select Committee on the Native Police Force but it required an equally expeditious implementation of the recommendations. While the government were fine turning their instrument of control and discipline, the Native Police, the unruly blacks skipped and pranced about at home among the gum trees, and every now and then, went down to the station beneath the trees where nobody sees, and played hide and seek as long as they pleased.

Then on 4 May 1857, the Governor General with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed Edric Vaux Morisset, Esquire, to be Commandant of the Native Police.⁷⁶

In response to the murder of Mr Cardew's shepherd, Andrew Volk, at Euroombah by the blacks, a police party pursued them and, when called upon to stop, they failed do so and were fired upon. Eight Aborigines were killed or wounded. On 16 March 1857, Sub Lt Thomas Ross, Dawson River advised Wandai Gumbal, Police Headquarters that "... with the exception of Robin Hood all the troopers have left me."⁷⁷ On 15 June 1857, Ross was at Hornet Bank station:

I arrived at Mr Fraser's station, a few days after the outrage mentioned in Mr Sandeman's letter had been attempted. On Mr Fraser informing me that he thought the blacks had made off into the broken country adjoining their run, I immediately discovered in the neighbourhood, on running these tracks up for 4 or 5 miles, I heard the blacks cooing; as the scrub was in this part very dense, I preferred riding round in order to meet them in a more open country to dismounting and attacking them on foot. Whilst making this detour the blacks discovered us and made off quickly in several different directions; in pursuing them 3 of my troopers separated from me leaving me with but one trooper together with Mr Fraser and Mr Scott, two neighbouring settlers, and a blackboy. On coming up with a party of them a second time, I discovered that a large body of the Glengarry tribe had joined them; it was now within a quarter of an hour of sundown. As my small party was not

⁷⁶ NSW Government Gazette 5 May 1857 [Issue No. 68] p 1023.

⁷⁷ QSA ID14733/86138 p 79.

sufficiently strong to attack such a large mob, Mr Fraser and Mr Scott not being sufficiently armed to render me any assistance, I thought it the most prudent plan to return to the station ...⁷⁸

Then, on or about 12 July 1857, a further four farm labourers were found murdered and their hut plundered on Mr Cardew's station, Euroombah, Dawson River. This naturally provoked Mr Cardew to complain about the lack of protection from the blacks by the Native Police and he was supported by Henry C. Gregory, JP; Gordon Sandeman; CR Haly, JP; Wm O'Grady Haly, JP.

To Edric NV Morisset Esq, Commandant, Native Police Force

We have arrived at the conclusion, both from our own experience, and the opinions of others well qualified to judge that the officer for some time past in charge of the detachment of the Native Police on the Upper Dawson, Mr Ross, is disqualified by inexperience and other sufficient causes for such a command, particularly in so disturbed and remote district, and we would specially remark that the statement of the police having had to retire before a body of blacks who were being followed by them after an attempted outrage upon Mrs Fraser (Hornet Bank) and her family, only six weeks ago, in consequence of the ammunition of the party, consisting as it was said (originally) of only one cartridge, is a sufficient charge, we submit, to render an enquiry into Mr Ross's conduct indispensable...⁷⁹

By a letter dated 7 September 1857 from Euroombah, EV Morisset, Commandant of Native Police informed Sub Lt Thomas Ross that he was suspended from the Force pending the approval of the Governor General. On 12 September, Morisset wrote to Wickham that the police had not been able to overtake the murderers of Mr Cardew's four men but had found the camp of those who murdered the last two. In endeavouring to take some prisoners, four Aborigines were shot. The clothes and pistols of the two murdered men were found in this camp.⁸⁰ On 26 September, from Upper Dawson, 2nd Lt T Ross replied to EV Morisset in a lengthy defence to the charges levelled against him by Morisset. On or about 15 October, Powell with seven or eight troopers took over the task of keeping the peace on the upper Dawson following the suspension of Second Lieutenant Ross.⁸¹

The Aborigines attacked the Fraser homestead of Hornet Bank in the early hours of the morning of 27 October 1857 and killed Martha Fraser, seven of her nine children, Henry Neagle (their tutor), two white station hands and Jimmy, an Aboriginal servant. The evening before the attack, Jimmy, had killed all the station dogs. The attackers killed the men, castrated Neagle, raped Martha Fraser and her two eldest daughters, and then clubbed them and the remaining children to death.

Martha Fraser, aged 43 years
John Fraser, aged 23
Elizabeth Fraser, aged 19
David Fraser, aged 16
Mary Fraser, aged 11
Jane Fraser, aged 9
James Fraser, aged 6
Charlotte Fraser, aged 3
Henry Neagle (tutor), aged 27
R. Newman (shepherd), aged 30
Ben Munro (shepherd), aged 45
Jimmy (Indigenous houseboy)

⁷⁸ The North Australian, Ipswich and General Advertiser 6 October 1857 p 3.

⁷⁹ The North Australian, Ipswich and General Advertiser 1 September 1857 p 3.

⁸⁰ Skinner, 1975 p 269.

⁸¹ Skinner, 1975 p 272. Note, Thomas Ross had been promoted to 2nd Lieutenant in the meantime.

What was of great concern to the community of squatters was the unmitigated effrontery of naked savages massacring a God-fearing, Christian family of white settlers in a cruel atavistic frenzy upon the hearthstone of pioneer fortitude. This event stands in the unsung annals of our history and culture as a monstrous act of primitive atrocity and savagery, little acknowledged and most definitely rarely remembered. The cause of this event is trivialised by most black armband writers⁸² by imputing to the males of the Fraser family moral degradation in the form of having illegal sex with female Aborigines which would inevitably lead to the Fraser's justifiable death by payback, when in fact, the massacre of the Frasers was a monstrous and heinous act of murder by a pusillanimous group of miscreants.⁸³ On Thursday 19 November 1857, C Cowper, Colonial Secretary said Lieutenant Ross, who it appeared had been guilty of some neglect, had been suspended, and steps taken to secure for the future greater efficiency in the native police corps.⁸⁴



⁸² Of course, the leader of the pack is our dear old friend, H Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier*, 2006 p 87; R Evans, *Fighting Words* UQP p 207; et al. What they are calling the Fraser males are gin jockeys and white trash, so much for scholarship when the informant, Nicoll, was dismissed from the Native Police and the surviving Frasers made a complaint against him, SLQ Colonial Secretary's letters received relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland 1822-1860, A2.42 p 372; also, Skinner, 1975 chapter 19.

⁸³ Skinner, 1975 p 308. See also Paul Dillon, *Inside the Killing Fields* Hornet Bank, Cullin-la-Ringo & The Maria Wreck, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane, 2020.

⁸⁴ MBC 5 December 1857 p 3.

1858

March 19, the Clerk of the Council, Edward C. Merewether advised that Thomas Ross, who was then under suspension, be dismissed from the public service. The council's recommendation was approved by Denison on 20 March 1858.⁸⁵ On 29 April, the House went into a committee of supply. The sum of £17,696 for native police (£16,246 for the northern districts, and £1450 for the southern), was proposed. C. Cowper said that perhaps the House would vote the amount of last year, and leave the corps to be dealt with by the Moreton Bay government (the colony of Queensland). That amount would be £1172 less than the sum proposed. He added it was true that the force was short of the number authorised, but he had already explained that great difficulty was experienced in obtaining recruits. The number was greater than the hon. member for Durham supposed. Mr. Cowper's opinion was that they numbered about forty. He had always been of opinion that the number of officers was out of proportion. Mr. Forster thought the money would be better expended if the blacks were gradually substituted by whites, a few blacks being retained as trackers. Mr. Robertson expressed an opinion similar in effect. After some remarks in support of the motion by Mr. Hodgson, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Parkes, who objected to the employment of savages as correctional police, moved the postponement of the vote for one month, with a view to obtaining information as to alleged massacres by the native police. Mr. Donaldson opposed the amendment. Further discussion was stopped, however, nineteen members only being present. Nevertheless, the sum of £17,699 18s. 4d. was passed to defray the expenses of the Native Police. This expenditure was the same as that of the previous year.⁸⁶

The Legislative Assembly on 15 June 1858, following a motion moved by Arthur Hodgson, which was subsequently amended, appointed a select committee "to inquire into and report upon the murders which have recently taken place on the Dawson River, and generally on the state of outrage between the white population and the Aborigines in the Northern Districts, with a view to providing for the better protection of life and property". He said that the extensive district of Leichhardt was at present unrepresented, and he felt that this question should be ventilated in the Assembly. He added he did not allude to the horrible tragedies which had been committed on the Dawson River when the vote of £16,000 for native police was before the House, because he did not wish to imperil that vote. As the separation of Moreton Bay from New South Wales was very near to its accomplishment, but would not now take place for the next eighteen months, he thought, considering murders were still being perpetrated and the inefficient state of the Native Police force, there was no time to lose in dealing with this important subject. Numerically speaking, they did not amount to fifty troopers. He believed, it would be perfectly impossible for the commandant to enlist the number of men required to make the force effective, and that in consequence of the difficulty of enlistment, he had been obliged to enlist into his force blacks actually resident or if not from among the tribes by whom the murders were committed, at all events, from their neighbours. Again, there was no law laid down why those blacks, if they enlisted to-day, should not desert to-morrow. In fact, they did desert with impunity. He was convinced that if steps were not taken to make the Native Police force more effective, the squatters must remove from those stations they had during the last three or four years occupied. During the last twelve months no less than thirty murders, including men, women, and children, had taken place in the districts to which he alluded. In fact, it was not an exaggeration of a figure of speech to say that the population was really being decimated by these natives. He did not believe for a moment that this was a matter which affected one locality merely; on the contrary, he believed it to be one of general interest, and one which concerned the prosperity of the colony itself. Mr. Cowper, Premier, said he would offer no opposition. He should support the motion and would afford every facility in his power to the committee in obtaining information.

⁸⁵ Skinner, 1975 p 291.

⁸⁶ Legislative Assembly, NSW, Hansard 1858.

Mr. Parkes objected on the ground that it did not go sufficiently far to embrace the entire question of the relation subsisting between the white population and the aborigines. Also, with the knowledge that there were rumours afloat that outrages equal to those committed by the blacks had been committed on them, he thought the proposed inquiry ought to go into the entire question of the relations subsisting between the white population and the blacks in the remote districts. He moved as an amendment, "That the question be amended by the omission of the words following the words Dawson River with a view to the insertion in their place of the words, and generally on the state of outrage between the white population and the aborigines in the Northern Districts." This issue raised by Parkes, of the relations subsisting between the white population and the blacks in the remote districts, for the modern commentator is the crux of the matter. The record suggests that the fundamental cause of conflict between white settlers and the Aborigines was never addressed nor were solutions proffered on how to end the collisions between settlers and blacks on the frontier. The 1858 Select Committee said:

Your Committee are convinced, by the evidence of the various witnesses examined, that the murders which have been committed on the Northern Frontier of this Colony may be attributed to those inevitable collisions which take place more or less between the blacks and whites in opening out a new tract of country, aggravated in a great measure by the inefficiency of the Native Police Force, and the mountainous and scrubby nature of the district.

In bringing their labours to a close, your committee desire to state that they feel assured that the efforts now being made are well calculated to allay those feelings of alarm and apprehension which have been so long prevalent in the unhappy district of the Leichhardt; and whilst they repudiate in the strongest terms any attempt to wage a war of extermination against the aborigines they are satisfied that there is no alternative but to carry matters through with a strong hand and punish with necessary severity all future outrages upon life and property; in order that the sanguinary conflicts between the native blacks and the settlers may for the future be avoided. Arthur Hodgson, chairman. Legislative Assembly Chamber, Sydney, 3rd August 1858.⁸⁷

In other words, the Committee could see the physical consequences of settlement, the collisions, but not the cause of the collisions. The assumption was that Aborigines were fully cognizant of the law and that their actions were unlawful as any white man would have known. Consequently, the actions and conduct of the Aborigines were seen as that of brigands. The overwhelming evidence and conventional wisdom of the squatters suggested that the collisions were unpreventable because the conduct of the Aborigines was criminal and irrational. Irrational in this sense, the act of settlement of Australia was self-evident, inevitable and legitimate amongst the nations of the world; the fact that the Aborigines couldn't understand or accept that meant they were living in ignorance of the universal world order, of the laws of nations. Since their ignorance was a barrier to civil, commercial and diplomatic exchange with the settlers, a protective and correctional force had to operate on the frontier to control and check their criminal activities.

On 17 August 1858, the Native Police Report was negatived by 12 to 3, Messrs, Buckley, Hodgson and Richardson only, voting for it.

⁸⁷ SMH 11 August 1858 p 2.

1859

January 18, the Estimate for Native Police amounting to £13,574 in all, was passed as it stood, without debate.⁸⁸ The Native Police, as it can well be imagined, spent not all their time in the torment and harassment of hostile natives as alleged, but on occasion provided assistance to white police in pursuit of white criminals.⁸⁹ As in the following case, two men, Thornton and Franklyn, at night made their escape out of a tent in which they were confined. They unlocked their handcuffs with a key they had purloined from one of the white constables, and then of course the rest was easy. They were, however, taken before breakfast time the next morning, the native police having been put on their tracks. They were thus run down before they had an opportunity of providing themselves with arms, and preparing themselves for a marauding expedition. In this case, the native police had shown how valuable they may become in country districts as allies to the more regular police force.

Mrs Treatroff, wife of a German shepherd, in the employ of Mrs. Macdonald, Dugandan, while in her hut about twelve miles from the head-station, was assaulted and violated by two blacks, who came into the hut looking for rations. One was employed at Messrs. Vaughan and Fraser's station, and another at Mr White's. The unfortunate woman was incapable of removal because of the injuries she had received. Warrants were issued, and the native police dispatched to apprehend the criminals.⁹⁰

The trials of Dick and Chamery commenced in the Supreme Court at Brisbane before his Honour Judge Lutwyche. Mr Pring, the Crown Prosecutor, proposed to try the prisoners separately, which proposition was acceded to and Mr C W Blakeney was appointed for the defence. The first prisoner tried was Chamery. The indictment charged him with having committed the offence on the prosecutrix, Mary Ann Treatroff, at Dugandan, on the Logan, on 11 January 1859. The witnesses were the prosecutrix, her son, a boy of eight years of age, Lieutenant EG Williams of the Native Police and Mr C Greig, the overseer of the station. Mr Appel interpreted for the prosecutrix and Mr Davis aka Duramboi, for the blacks. The main incidents, fit for publication, were that the prosecutrix was the wife of a shepherd residing at Mrs. Macdonald's Twelve-mile station, and that Dick and Chamery lived on adjacent stations, being known, as Dick, "Frazer's black boy" and as Chamery, "White's black boy." On the day of the offence, the prisoners went to the hut of the prosecutrix naked and asked for some dinner. She denied them dinner, but gave them some rations. The blacks sat and talked some time and at length proceeded to commit the offence.

His Honour summed up very judiciously, alluded to the statement which Chamery had made to Lieutenant EG Williams which he interpreted as a confession of the crime in the words "What a stupid head mine must be to ravish a white woman," and made the following remarks to the jury on the nationality of the prisoner: "I have heard with some degree of surprise of prejudice existing against blackfellows in this district. It is possible that we may not like a blackfellow for a companion as well as we should like a white man. But you must each remember that he, the prisoner, is as much a subject of the Queen as you are, and I feel satisfied there is not one in the box that will not cast aside any prejudice he may entertain, and you will judge the prisoner as you would a British born subject."

The jury consulted a short time and returned a verdict of guilty. A new jury was empanelled and the trial of Dick proceeded. He was also found guilty. His Honour was visibly affected at the dread

⁸⁸ Moreton Bay Courier 19 January 1859 p 4.

⁸⁹ See p 77 below for discussion of Ørsted-Jensen's method for determining Aborigines killed by the Native Police.

⁹⁰ The North Australian, Ipswich and General Advertiser 25 January 1859 p 3.

sentence he was called upon to pass, and sat for a few moments evidently the subject of strong emotions. Mr Pring asked if his Honour would like the interpreter to translate the sentence; and he replied he should. Mr Davis then was called to act. The Clerk read the indictment, and in reply to the question: if they had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon them, Chamery said he did not do it, and knew nothing about it. Dick denied the charge, and said, also, that he knew nothing about it. The Judge said:

Chamery and Dick, you have both been found guilty of ravishing and carnally knowing one Mary Ann Treatroff. That was a very wicked thing; and you know it was a very wicked thing, for you have lived with white people a long time. You probably also knew that the punishment for the crime was death; and the law says that you must die. I shall, therefore, pronounce the sentence of the law, which is, that you Chamery, and you Dick, be taken to the place from whence you came and from thence to the place of execution, there to be hanged by the neck till you be dead; and may God have mercy on your souls.⁹¹

The sentence of the law was carried out on the morning of 4 August 1859. The gallows were erected in the Brisbane gaol yard. The Sheriff read the order for execution. Elliott, the hangman, proceeded to pinion the arms of Chamery and Dick. The Rev EB Shaw remained with the prisoners. The Sheriff, WA Brown, Esq, with an armed police guard, marched in processional order and demanded the bodies of Chamery and Dick for execution from the gaoler. The procession then proceeded to the scaffold. The gaol bell tolled as the funeral knell, and when the police had formed in order round the scaffold, Dick and Chamery ascended, followed by the hangman. The Rev EB Shaw went up on the scaffold, spoke kindly to the two unfortunates and after a slight stay, he shook them by the hands which they responded to as well as their pinions would allow; the clergyman retired.

Elliott then placed the rope round the neck of each of the unfortunate ones. There was no expression of sorrow from either of the prisoners not even when the hangman adjusted the rope. Soon the white caps were drawn over the faces of the two, the bolt of the drop was withdrawn, and all was over with their earthly existence. Dr Cannan, who was present, said he believed death was instantaneous in both cases. It was intended that the native police should have been present, but in consequence of the bad state of the roads they did not arrive until the execution was over.

They were then, however, taken to view the bodies, and two of the troopers who arrested the prisoners were asked if they understood the matter and having expressed themselves that they did, and the whole of the troopers having viewed the sad end of the criminals of Dugandan, they were marched away. After the bodies had been suspended some time, they were taken down by Elliott, the hangman and John Bull, a blackfellow, helped to put them into the coffins. They were shortly after taken away on a dray, to be interred in the bush, outside the burying grounds. About thirty persons were present, who were admitted by tickets, issued by the Sheriff, and all felt the solemnity of the scene.⁹²

It is difficult to see how the actions of Dick and Chamery furthered the liberation of the Aborigines from the yoke of white colonialism. Although sexual violence and rape are now acknowledged as weapons of war, they are, nevertheless, classified as crimes against humanity. Then again, Dick and Chamery may not have been soldiers in the war of Aboriginal liberation but common or garden variety of criminals who paid the ultimate price for their wrong doing.

⁹¹ MBC 13 July 1859 p 3.

⁹² MBC 6 August 1859 p 2.

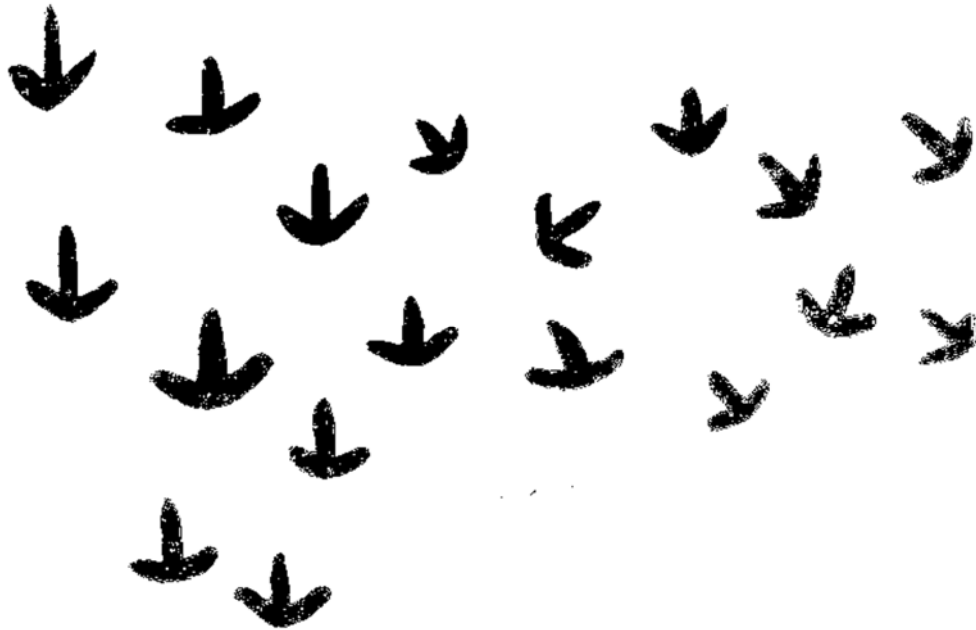
Queensland Native Police

The Distribution of Native Police within the Moreton Bay Settlement — Pugh 1859

Location	Division	Officers
Moreton Bay	Comptroller	Captain Wickham
Headquarters	Commandant	EV Morisset
Headquarter	Secretary	FB Hampton
Port Curtis & Leichhardt	First Division	Lieut. J Murray, 2 nd Lieuts. FJ Powell. FW Carr, GPM Murray, F Wheeler, WRL Swete & RB Poulden
Wide Bay & Burnett	Second Division	Lieut. J O'C Bligh, 2 nd Lieut. CH Phibbs
Maranoa & Condamine	Third Division	Lieut. RG Walker, 2 nd Lieuts. F Allman & W Moorhead
Moreton Bay	Fourth Division	2 nd Lieut. E Williams
Clarence & Macleay	Fifth Division	2 nd Lieut. R Dempster



Chapter Two — Queensland



The separation of the district of Moreton Bay from the colony of New South Wales and its erection into a separate colony, under the designation of Queensland, was notified in the London Gazette of 3 June 1859. The act of separation, however, did not take place until the legal instrument effecting separation reached Moreton Bay. On 10 December 1859, the Governor arrived at Government House, Brisbane. His Excellency ascended to the balcony, where he was loudly cheered by the throng below, and took the requisite oaths of office, which were administered by his Honour the Resident Judge. The Queen's commission, appointing his Excellency Governor of Queensland, was then read by Mr. Herbert from the balcony, which was immediately followed by the subjoined proclamation, read by Mr. A. O. Moriarty, the acting private secretary:

By His Excellency Sir George Ferguson Bowen, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Captain General and Governor-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies, and Vice Admiral of the same, &c., &c., &c.

Whereas her Majesty has been graciously pleased, by letters patent under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland bearing date at Westminster, the sixth day of June, in the twenty-second Year of her Majesty's Reign, to separate from the Colony of New South Wales the Colony described in the said Letters Patent, and to erect the Same into a separate Colony, to be called the Colony of Queensland, and has further been pleased to constitute and appoint me, Sir George Ferguson Bowen, Knight Commander of the most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, to be Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief, in and over the said Colony of Queensland and its dependencies: Now therefore, I, the Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief aforesaid, do hereby proclaim and declare that I have this day taken the prescribed oaths before His Honour Alfred James Peter Lutwyche, Esquire,

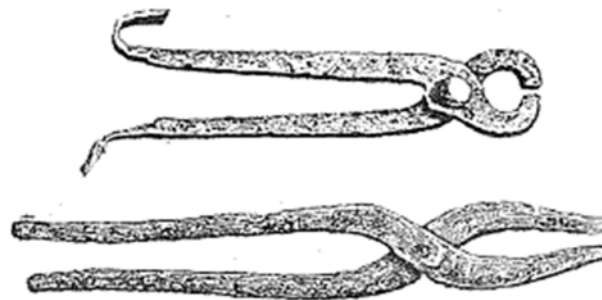
Queensland Native Police

Judge of the Supreme Court, and that I have accordingly assumed the said office of Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief. Given under my hand and seal at Government House, Brisbane, this tenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine, and in the twenty-third year of Her Majesty's reign. (L.S.) G. F. BOWEN.

Although a new colony had come into being, administrative arrangement put in place by the mother government in the UK meant that that little would change in the daily lives of the Moreton Bay residents until the new government found its feet and began to govern. The Native Police, who would patrol the length and breadth of Queensland after separation, would continue as before. Their appointment to the Queensland Native Police was confirmed by the Governor in December 1859 as follows:⁹³

Native Police Establishment as at December 1859

Office	Name	Date of Appt NSW	By Whom	Salary
Commandant	EV Morisset	5 May 1857	Governor	£650
Acting Secretary	AE Dodwell	16 March 1859	Governor	Nil
1 st Lieutenant	John Murray	1 January 1852	Governor	£345 12 6
1 st Lieutenant	John O'C Bligh	6 April 1853	Governor	£345 12 6
1 st Lieutenant	Robert G Walker	9 January 1858	Governor	£345 12 6
2 nd Lieutenant	FT Powell	1 April 1856	Governor	£239 10 0
2 nd Lieutenant	JT Baker		Governor	£239 10 0
2 nd Lieutenant	EG Williams	15 August 1857	Governor	£239 10 0
2 nd Lieutenant	GP Murray	1 October 1857	Governor	£239 10 0
2 nd Lieutenant	WRL Swete	9 February 1858	Governor	£239 10 0
2 nd Lieutenant	CH Phibbs	15 May 1857	Governor	£239 10 0
2 nd Lieutenant	F Wheeler	1 January 1858	Governor	£239 10 0
2 nd Lieutenant	W Morehead	1 July 1857	Governor	£239 10 0
Camp Sergeants	9 in total		Governor	£100 each
Troopers	100 in total		Governor	5d. each/day



⁹³ Qld Legislative Assembly, Votes and Proceedings, 1860 p 921. Please note this list does not include 2nd Lieutenant Fred. W Carr appointed 8 May 1857.

1860

In the government gazette of 14 January 1860, the Governor appointed Edric Norfolk Vaux Morisset, Commandant of Native Police, to be also Inspector-General of Police for Queensland.

On the morning of 2 February 1860, Maryborough was roused by shouts of “stop him,” yells, and the stamping of horses. It was Lieutenant John Bligh, with a troop of Native Police, chasing a tribe of well-known aboriginal desperados. He had been after them for a long time, and after much careful watching, tracking and hardship, came upon their tracks on 1 February, about the Six Miles Waterholes. He tracked them to Mr. Cleary's and from thence into town. The blacks scampered all ways, and made for the places they thought the best protection would be given by the inhabitants of Maryborough. In this, however, they were mistaken; for nothing but their capture or death would satisfy. They called lustily for assistance, but that assistance was not forthcoming. Two had got under the wharf where they remained for about an hour and Lieut. Bligh tried all he could to induce them to surrender. He got one of his men who spoke their language to act as an interpreter, and told them that if they came out no harm should be done to them. As he had warrants for their arrest, he sent two of his men under the wharf to get them out, and when the troopers had taken off their clothes and were getting under the wharf, the blacks struck out towards the other side of the river, and Bligh got into a boat and followed them. He fired at one blackfellow whom he knew; the one who bore the worst character and for whom he had a warrant. It is believed the Aborigine was hit and died from the effect of the gunshot wound. The other Aborigine killed, Darkie, was a felon, well known to police. He was shot by a native trooper in full pursuit, just as he was entering the scrub. This Aborigine had been committed for felony, and had made his escape in irons from the steamer, for which the constable in charge of him, got six months for allowing a prisoner to escape from his custody. As a result of this tumult and successful police operation, a meeting was held at the Maryborough court-house. A very elegant cavalry sword was presented to Lieutenant John Bligh of the Native Mounted Police for his excellent police work.⁹⁴

On or about March 1860, Lieutenant Fred. W Carr of the native police stationed in the Maranoa and Condamine district came into contact with a large body of blacks of about one hundred and fifty, all in fighting order, and were evidently bent on attacking a neighbouring station. On the appearance of the police, the blacks, contrary to their wont, immediately assumed the offensive, and fifteen of them were killed and others wounded before they could be beaten back. Among the killed was one of the ringleaders in the Hornet Bank affair. The troopers, eight in number did not come off without loss and wounds, and Lieut. Carr himself was wounded by a nullah nullah at the commencement of the engagement.⁹⁵

In opening Parliament on 22 May 1860, the Governor noted inter alia that, “An effective Police Force is now in process of organisation under the new Inspector General. Some of the regulations proposed will require further legislative sanction, and have been embodied in a Bill to be submitted for your approval.” In the Legislative Assembly of 20 June 1860, Mr Forbes moved that a select committee, to consist of six members, exclusive of the mover, be appointed by ballot, to enquire into the efficiency, management and general working of the Police and Native Police forces throughout the colony. He said the native police should be employed chiefly on the frontiers for the protection of settlers.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ MBC 21 February 1860 p 4; also, Qld SC 1861 Native Police Report, per Bligh.

⁹⁵ MBC 22 March 1860 p 2. Also, Lt Carr's evidence before Qld SC 1861 Native Police Report p 130.

⁹⁶ Hansard, LA, 12 September 1860.

In the House of 7 September 1860, Mr. Forbes moved the adoption of the report of the select committee appointed to enquire into the condition of the police force of the colony. He said in regards the Native Police the report affirmed that the office of Inspector General of Police was unnecessary; and that the commandant should make all appointments subject to the approval of the government. It also appeared from the evidence that the equipment of the native police force was incomplete and unsatisfactory, the guns were bad, and in consequence of the bad saddles the backs of the horses were galled. It was necessary to equip the force so as to make it as efficient as possible. The Colonial Secretary said he relied on the evidence that had been collected by the committee and considered the report a sound one. He disagreed with the abolition of an inspector-general of police; he considered that no proper discipline or efficiency could be maintained as long as there was no recognised head of the police to superintend the whole force. He thought also that the appointment of all officers to the native police force should vest in the government instead of in the commandant, as recommended in the report. As the commandant was responsible to the government, the government would look to him, as they had always done, for recommendations; but the Executive being responsible to the country, they should have the right of appointment. The Attorney-General defended the report generally but expressed himself unfavourable to that recommendation that the Executive should be divested of the power of appointing officers of the Native Police, and that such power should be vested in the Commandant. The report was adopted without opposition.⁹⁷

REPORT OF THE POLICE FORCE COMMITTEE, 20 June 1860
NATIVE POLICE

Although it would appear from the evidence taken by your Committee under this head, that the Force is a great expense to the country, an expense which at present cannot be curtailed without destroying its efficiency, they believe it is now in a most efficient state, under better management, and in better working order than it has been for some years previous: they consider it may be necessary to add to the Force as the new country becomes occupied, and that by carrying out the following recommendations, which they have arrived at from the evidence adduced, the Native Police Force may be rendered quite efficient for the purpose for which it is designed.

1. Your Committee recommend that the headquarters of the Force should be at Rockhampton, where the Commandant also should be stationed, that locality being the most convenient for the effectual performance of his duties.

2. That the Commandant should be required by the Government frequently to inspect the Force at the different stations, and to determine the different localities at which stations should be placed, and the Force necessary for each station.

3. That he should require monthly reports from the officers in command of each station of the daily duties of the force under his command, and also a quarterly statement of accounts, and that copies of such accounts should be forwarded to the Colonial Secretary, at Brisbane, as soon as practicable.

4. That all appointments to the force and dismissal therefrom, should rest with the commandant, subject to the approval of the Government, and that he should be held responsible for the efficiency of his officers, and the proper management of the whole force.

5. That the clerk now employed as secretary in the police department, be continued in that office, and that in addition to his duties as such, under the supervision of the Colonial Secretary, he should keep the Native Police accounts, receive reports from the commandant, forward supplies, and do all the duties necessary for the clerical management of the department.

6. That the number of troopers for which provision is made in the Estimates for 1861, should be kept up, and that the recruits should be procured at as great a distance as possible from the districts in which they are to be stationed.

⁹⁷ Hansard, LA, 7 September 1860.

The First Twenty Years

7. That steps be taken to equip the force in such a manner as would add to its efficiency, as it appears that both the saddles and firearms are of an inferior description, and not adapted for the purposes intended. F. A. Forbes, Chairman. Legislative Assembly Chambers, Brisbane, 5 September 1860.⁹⁸

The Colonial Secretary's Office, Brisbane, announced on 20 November 1860, that it proposed to open the new district of Kennedy to occupation on 1 January 1861. The settlement at Port Denison was to consist of Mr GE Dalrymple, Commissioner for the Kennedy District, Mr Gordon, the Harbour Master and Clerk of Petty Sessions and a Mr Thomas, clerk to Mr Dalrymple. Dalrymple left Rockhampton about 1 February 1861, with a strong party of Native Police, for the protection of the settlers. He proceeded overland to the Burdekin, accompanied by the native police and others who were willing to avail themselves of the escort.⁹⁹ The district of Kennedy was described as second to none and would become the headquarters of cotton, coffee, and sugar cultivation in Australia. The natives were numerous and hostile, and the native police had several collisions with them. Several of the native police absconded and have not been heard of. A party returned from the interior, and stated they came suddenly upon a native camp, and found Aborigines in the act of roasting a human body, and human bones with the flesh partly eaten off had been seen in several of their camps; thus, proving beyond a doubt, that they were cannibals. The natives ventured very close to the settlement on several occasions in well-armed parties, but were driven back by the native police; and a party had to return from the interior on finding them too numerous to cope with.¹⁰⁰

The Colonial-Secretary's Office, Brisbane, further announced a tender on 26 November 1860 for the supply of the undermentioned articles for the use of the Queensland Native Police force: 10,000 Rounds Ball cartridge; 2,500 Rounds Blank cartridge; 15,000 Percussion Caps; 10 Cleaning Rods for Carbines; etc which clearly demonstrates that the Native Police at that stage of their existence were still using ball and cap muzzle loading carbines.¹⁰¹

The following evidence from the 1861 Select Committee makes interesting reading and brings home how incompetent and inefficient the Native Police were because of the lack of government supplies and logistic support:

(John McDonnell, Secretary of the Police Department.) I stated to the principal under-Secretary that we had already advertised and got no tenders, and had been obliged to fall back on New South Wales for a supply (of ammunition). Mr. Manning then undertook to send a letter in the usual way, and see about it. When I was in Sydney I spoke to the acting Colonial Storekeeper about it, and he said they must have overlooked the matter—the office had been upset, and great changes had been made in it, and so the supply of ammunition must have been overlooked; but he promised to send it up immediately.

47. That was in January (1861)? Yes; when I got back, I told Mr. Manning, and we got a Supply a short time since.

48. How long ago? I can't say exactly.

49. Within the last month? No, further back than a month, because in May I sent a whole lot away: I sent some to three divisions.

50. Which were they? They were all on the sea coast; I sent ammunition to Sandgate, Maryborough, and Rockhampton; I sent some also to Rockhampton, to be forwarded to Port Denison, and now I have to send some up to the third division.

51. The Condamine division? Yes.

⁹⁸ MBC 8 September 1860 p 6.

⁹⁹ MBC 15 December 1860 p 4 & MBC 17 January 1861 p 2.

¹⁰⁰ Courier 24 June 1861 p 3.

¹⁰¹ MBC 4 December 1860 p 3.

Queensland Native Police

52. Since you have been in the office—about a year and a-half—has any ammunition been sent to the third division? No, none.

53. During that period you have never been able to send any? No.

54. They have been left to their own resources? Yes, to whatever they had on hand; there has been no ammunition in the colony at all.

55. By the Chairman: We have got it in evidence from you that there has been great delay, not sufficiently accounted for, in transmitting clothing and ammunition to the Native Police Force—has the Commandant ever sent any remonstrance on the subject? No.

56. Never? Not a remonstrance, but the last time he was here, going up from Sydney, I mentioned that I was trying to send the things off as quickly as possible, but that they were coming in very slowly, and he asked me to be sure and send them off as soon as I received them.

57. Has he, in the last six months, ever addressed any remonstrance to the Government or the Colonial Secretary? Not to my own knowledge.

58. Don't you consider it part of the duty of the Commandant to inspect as to whether the troopers are properly provided? Yes.¹⁰²

As at 31 December 1860, the Native Police were stationed throughout Queensland as follows:¹⁰³

Location	Rank	Name	Date of Appt
Port Curtis & Leichhardt	Lieut. Cmding 1 st Div.	J Murray	1 Jan 1852
	2 nd Lieut.	EG Williams	15 Aug 1857
	2 nd Lieut.	GPM Murray	1 Oct 1857
	2 nd Lieut.	JT Baker	1859
	2 nd Lieut.	AF Matvieff	6 Jan 1860
	2 nd Lieut.	J Darley	2 Feb 1860
	2 nd Lieut.	RR Morisset	12 Aug 1860
	2 nd Lieut.	AMG Patrick	12 Aug 1860
	2 nd Lieut.	CJ Blakeney	5 Oct 1860
	Camp Sergeants	Seven (7)	
Wide Bay & Burnett	Troopers	Sixty (60)	
	Lieut. Cmding 2 nd Div.	J O'C Bligh	6 April 1853
	2 nd Lieut.	CH Phibbs	10 May 1857
	Camp Sergeant	One (1)	
Maranoa & Condamine	Troopers	Eighteen (18)	
	Lieut. Cmding 3 rd Div.	RG Walker	9 June 1858
	2 nd Lieut.	FW Carr	8 May 1857
	2 nd Lieut.	W Morehead	1 May 1857
	Camp Sergeant	Two (2)	
Moreton Bay	Troopers	Twenty-four (24)	
	2 nd Lieut. Cmding 4 th Div.	F Wheeler	1 June 1858
	Camp Sergeant	One (1)	
Burdekin	Troopers	Eight (8)	
	Lieut. Cmding 5 th Div.	FT Powell	5 Oct 1860
	2 nd Lieut.	J Marlow	5 Oct 1860
	Camp Sergeant	One (1)	
	Troopers	Eighteen (18)	
	Commandant	ENV Morisset	5 May 1857
	Cadet	EG Genatas	8 Oct 1860

¹⁰² 1861 Qld LA Select Committee on the Native Police Force, p 140.

¹⁰³ Statistical Register 1860, Registrar-General's Office, Brisbane 10 June 1861.

1861

An inquest on the body of a pretty young girl named Fanny Briggs was held on 26 November 1860 at Rockhampton. She came from Sydney, where she had been a barmaid at the Royal Hotel, George Street, and had been residing with Mr John A. Watts, West Rockhampton, a butcher. He lived on the Gracemere road, near the Sportsman's Arms Hotel, four miles from town. He had left home on 25 October 1860, leaving Fanny and a servant man in charge of the place. A number of horses were missed almost immediately after Mr Watts' departure. Briggs expressed great anxiety concerning them and discharged the servant man on 26 October because he had not taken better care of them. Assistance was sought from the police but was refused, and there being no tidings of the missing horses up to 28 October, she saddled a horse and went in search of them. On that afternoon she was seen by some persons in the neighbourhood of the racecourse. Mr Watts on his return, finding her absent, became alarmed and at once gave information to the police requesting an immediate search.¹⁰⁴

To the Commandant of Native Police, Rockhampton from John Murray, Lieut. 1st Division, NMP Camp, 6 January 1861.

On the evening of the 6th November, 1860, Mr. John Watts, whose farm adjoins the police reserve, came here, and reported to me that the deceased was missing, and that he had every reason to believe she had gone astray in the scrub, whilst looking for horses, which she was in the habit of doing almost every morning. I started in a few minutes with him, taking Mr. Genatas and trooper Toby, and remained in the bush searching until 9.30 pm; next morning the search was resumed by all in my camp. On the 8th, the search was continued, but still without success. On the 9th, every trooper proceeded on foot to look for tracks, they were out all day, during which time I saw them frequently myself, but they were still unsuccessful. On the 10th, came upon tracks, following which I discovered the saddlecloth on the edge of a scrub four miles from this camp. The same day a despatch was sent to Lieutenant Powell to bring the whole of his detachment from Princhester to assist in the search. I may here state that an opinion was daily gaining ground, that the deceased had left for Sydney, without communicating her intention to anyone, but still the search was in no manner relaxed, either by the police or by the townspeople. On the 11th, I was still searching with every available officer and trooper, but discovered nothing further. On the 12th, the body of the deceased was found, present at the time, yourself, Mr. Genatas, Serjeant Kelly, Mr. Hay, and myself, with six troopers. The body was in a dreadful state of decomposition, but found in such a position, as to leave no doubt in the minds of all present that she had been violated and brutally murdered. On the 13th, you, Mr. Hay, and I, accompanied by Serjeant Kelly and four troopers, proceeded on the tracks of a large number of blacks, supposed to have committed the atrocity.

You, yourself, having had command of the party at the time, I do not deem it necessary to particularize further, then to state that 'no indiscriminate' slaughter took place, and that I made an attempt to secure a black of the name of Mico, the murderer of a German hutkeeper on Mr Archer's station, on the 12th of March last, in which attempt he was shot. It was whilst on the tracks of these blacks that our suspicions were aroused, that some of the troopers then with us were implicated in the murder. We returned to the camp on the 16th, and on the 17th steps were taken to secure the two troopers Toby and Gulliver, on whom suspicion had fallen. The same day, accompanied by Lieutenant Powell and two troopers, I went to the scene of the outrage in order to examine it more closely; the search had no result. I am aware that a bullock dray was camped for nearly a week, within a mile of the place where the woman was killed, and that some of the troopers of this force had obtained spirits at various times from the drays, and I believe that some of their number committed the murder whilst under the influence of liquor. I have also to state that the troopers Toby and Gulliver were favourites of the deceased, frequently helping her to find horses, and I am aware that she has repeatedly given them grog, in payment for their services. No doubt remains in my mind that they, assisted by one or two half civilised blacks, and especially one named Dicky from Mr Wiseman's camp, committed the murder. During the search for the body all the officers and

¹⁰⁴ MBC 1 December 1860 p 3; North Australian, Ipswich and General Advertiser 4 December 1860 p 3.

sergeants were most zealous in the discharge of their duty, and the troopers appeared to be no less so. After frequent examinations at the police office, suspicion was cast upon a trooper of Lieutenant Powell's detachment named Ballantyne, and another trooper named Alma, who had left this camp for Wide Bay with Lieutenant Phibbs, Lieutenant Powell and I left the camp the same morning—Lieutenant Powell for Wide Bay and myself for Yaamba—in order to arrest the above-named troopers, and we both succeeded in lodging them in the lock-up at Rockhampton. Trooper Ballantyne was proved to be innocent by Second Lieutenant Darley, in whose company he was during the day of the murder. Troopers Toby and Alma still remain in confinement.

E. V. Morisset, Commandant NMP, Rockhampton, 7 January 1861 to the Colonial Secretary, the murder of Fanny Briggs.

... We accordingly left the barracks, and hearing that a party of blacks had left Mr. Archer's station, which is only a few miles from where the murder was committed, a few days before, we determined to follow on their tracks for the purpose of discovering, if possible, some of the property that was supposed to have been taken from the murdered woman in their camps. Among the troopers that accompanied us were Toby and Gulliver; and from several small circumstances that I noticed while in the bush with them, I felt perfectly satisfied in my own mind that they were implicated in the murder, if not actually the guilty parties; but determined on catching the blacks we had been following before we returned, to find, if possible, as I have just stated, some traces of the murdered woman in their camps.

On the fourth morning I think it was, we came up with the blacks travelling near Raglan Creek, when Mr. Murray discovered a black, named Miche, who had a short time previously murdered a shepherd in the employ of Mr Archer, and for whose apprehension a warrant had been granted, running in the direction of the creek, and which he had nearly gained when he was shot by one of the troopers. Had he not been shot he would certainly have made his escape, as it was quite impossible for horses to cross the creek. I believe another black was either accidentally wounded or shot here, but I did not see him. I can prove by almost every officer and serjeant in the division that this is the only occasion on which the blacks and police have come in collision since the murder of Fanny Briggs, and can therefore deny most distinctly the truth of the report, that the police committed an unnecessary and indiscriminate slaughter of the blacks in this neighbourhood.

I then returned to barracks, and got warrants for the two troopers, Toby and Gulliver, and having apprehended them myself, did everything in my power to get sufficient evidence to convict the guilty parties. After this, two more troopers, viz., Alma and Billy, were apprehended on suspicion, the former by Lieutenant Powell, at Wide Bay, whither he (Alma) had gone with Mr. Rudolf R. Morisset, to bring horses from the Clarence, and the latter at Princhester. Billy was at once discharged, and Alma has remained in custody.

With the escape of Gulliver of course the police had nothing to do, as he got away from the constables and sergeant Kelly, by whom he was taken from the lock-up to the scrub, for the purpose as he (Gulliver) pretended, of finding the bridle that was on the horse that the murdered woman last rode, but I regret exceedingly to state that I firmly believe that the troopers who were in search of him could more than once have re-captured him had they chosen, and I am certain no blame can be attached to the officers who accompanied them, nor is it just to accuse them of apathy, or want of zeal, as no exertion on their part was spared. Believing this, I exchanged the troopers who were at the Rockhampton Barracks at the time of the murder, with the detachment stationed at Port Curtis, under the command of Second Lieut. Baker, being satisfied that they would, if possible, re-capture Gulliver, and a report I now enclose from Lieut. Powell on the subject, will shew that I was not deceived in them.

To the Commandant of the Native Police from F. T. Powell, Lieut. NMP Barracks, Fitzroy, 3 January 1861.

I do myself the honour to report for your information that upon my arrival in Wide Bay, after capturing the prisoner Alma, I was informed that trooper Gulliver had escaped from the custody of the chief constable of Rockhampton in whose charge he was, on suspicion of having been concerned in the murder of the late Fanny Briggs.

The First Twenty Years

On my arrival at Gladstone I heard that he had made his way to Raglan Creek, a station belonging to Mr. James Landsborough, about half-way between Rockhampton and Gladstone, with a view, as I suppose, of persuading two of his countrymen stationed at Gladstone to desert and go with him to their own country (Upper Dawson.) He had taken a horse and bridle from a dray on the road, which he abandoned after having ridden to Raglan Creek, where he was surprised by Lieutenant Murray, but through the darkness of the night he escaped capture. He immediately made back for this neighbourhood and going to Messrs. Archer's Ten-mile Station stole a carbine, a blanket, &c., and stopped about here with the intention of obtaining his gin, at that time in this camp.

On the 24th he went to Messrs. Archer's Seven-mile Station, and took from there a double-barrelled gun, a pair of blankets, razors, tobacco, cartridges, and rations, taking the road towards the Dawson. On my getting information, three days after he had committed the hut robbery, I started in pursuit with Cadet Genatas and three troopers, and after four days' search, tracked him to his camp in a scrub on the Dee, getting between him and his arms. He immediately took into the thickest part of the scrub, and, after tracking him till dark, I camped at the place. Next morning, while getting my horses, I was informed that Gulliver had gone to some drays, one of the black boys, named Kennis, formerly a trooper in the Native Mounted Police, who was attending the drays, made him drunk and secured him. On arriving at the spot, I took charge of the prisoner, and proceeded towards Rockhampton. On passing through a thick scrub on the Calliungal Road, he tried to get away and I was compelled, in order to prevent his escape, to fire on him. He fell, mortally wounded, and died within five minutes. I brought all the stolen property to Seven-mile Station, and delivered the things to their respective owners. I was informed by Kennis that Gulliver had told him that he (Gulliver) with troopers Toby and Alma had, after violating the woman Fanny Briggs, killed her to prevent her giving information. They, in company with some of the troopers stationed at this camp, had been drinking grog at some bullock drays camped about a mile from where the murder was committed. Hoping that my conduct will meet with your approbation.¹⁰⁵

A magisterial inquiry was held at Rockhampton into the death of trooper Alma on 11 February 1861.

John H Canning being sworn states: I am a constable in the Rockhampton Police and have charge of the lockup. The deceased, Trooper Alma, was confined as a prisoner on suspicion of murder. About ½ past 10 o'clock on Saturday morning the 9th instant, I proceeded to the river at high water with the prisoner Alma, as usual, to procure a bucket of water to wash his cell with. While filling the bucket he went into the water deeper than was necessary. I told him to stand or I would shoot him. Before I had time to speak again, he dived down and dropped the bucket out of his hand. I ran close to the water's edge and fired at him. I believe the ball struck him. He rose to the surface and swam a short distance and sank. I did not see him till his body was found yesterday (Sunday). The prisoner was in double irons when he escaped.

John Ballfey being duly sworn states: I am Camp Sergeant of the Rockhampton police and at present acting as Chief Constable. I did not see the deceased attempt to escape but saw the body taken from the river last night. I did not find any gunshot wound. There might have been a wound without my seeing it. The man was buried by order of the Police Magistrate.

Matthew Landae Rundle being duly sworn states: I am the Harbour Master at Rockhampton. I cannot say whether he was shot or not. He kept himself above water for two minutes and then sank. I saw his body recovered last night. His head was above water when the body was found.¹⁰⁶

Letter to the Editor of the *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* from Toby.

Having observed in the first paragraph of Lieutenant Powell's letter, inserted in your journal of the 31st January, the following rather remarkable assertion, "Upon my arrival after capturing the prisoner Alma, I learned that prisoner Gulliver had effected his escape, from the custody of the Chief Constable at Rockhampton, in whose charge he was at the time, on suspicion of having caused the

¹⁰⁵ MBC 24 January 1861 p 2.

¹⁰⁶ QSA ID348602, Jus/N3/61/14

death of the late Fanny Briggs," and as such an accusation if not contradicted, must most unquestionably have injured the reputation of the Chief of this district, than whom there is not in the service a more efficient officer, I think it only justice to him to inform the public of the particulars connected with this prisoner's escape. Gulliver was handed over to the Native Police Sergeant Kelly and Trooper Bourke, by order of the Bench of Magistrates, for the purpose of securing a bridle the property of deceased, alleged to have been concealed in Archer's scrub, and (Gulliver) was well ironed and roped at the time. I find inserted in the Police Court deposition book here, the following instructions, as delivered to Kelly, by Inspector Quirk. "Sergeant Kelly, I delivered over this prisoner into your custody, by order of the Bench; he is charged with murder, and I direct you to be particularly cautious of him, as my impression and belief is that his statement with reference to the bridle being secreted in the scrub, is fictitious, and merely a delusion to induce you to permit his entering it. Remember, I hold you responsible for his safe custody; in the meantime, should he attempt to escape from you in the bush, shoot him. Trooper Bourke will accompany you and will be held equally responsible for the safe keeping of the prisoner; my firm conviction is that you will not return with him to the watch house as he is an arch fiend."

Mr. John Watts accompanied the aforementioned officers, and was present when Gulliver effected his escape. Upon the arrival of Bourke at the camp he was immediately suspended by Mr. Quirk, and subsequently reinstated by the magistrates, it appearing to them from the evidence adduced, that there was no blame attributable to Bourke's conduct in the matter, as the prisoner's escape had been effected owing chiefly to the indolence and inefficiency of Sergeant Kelly, (who it will be remembered unloosed the handcuffs from off the prisoner, and gave him a tomahawk with which he afterwards succeeded in cutting the rope with which he was bound.) I may also add for the edification of our Queensland model police disciplinarians, that Inspector Quirk remarked to the Bench at the time that he had no control over Sergeant Kelly as he was not amenable to law, not having been an attested constable. By inserting the above in refutation of Mr. Powell's rather novel effusion, in your fast progressing Journal, you will much oblige.¹⁰⁷

In the opening of the Second Session of the Queensland Parliament, 1861, His Excellency made reference to the Native Police as follows:

8. I recommend you to direct your attention to the condition of the aborigines in Queensland, and to take evidence before a Parliamentary Committee as to the feasibility of improving it, whether by the establishment of Industrial Schools, or in any other practical manner. In connection with this subject, I recommend you to take evidence as to the organization and present condition of the Native Police Corps, and to consider what means it may be desirable to adopt to increase the discipline and efficiency of this necessary protective force.

The Colonial Treasurer moved: "That a select committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers, and sit during any adjournment of the House, to inquire into and report on the organisation and management of the Native Police Force; and further, to inquire into and report how far it may be practicable to ameliorate the present condition of the aborigines of the colony; such committee to consist of four members to be chosen by ballot." The Attorney-General seconded the motion. By an amendment, the committee was increased to eight members, viz., Mackenzie, Fitzsimmons, Gore, Moffatt, Blakeney, Royds, Watts, and Ferrett. Dr Challinor said, "the friends of the aborigines merely wish to see justice done; they merely wish when unnecessary excesses are traced to their actual perpetrator, he shall be brought before a bench of magistrates and afterwards, if necessary, before a jury." Debate ensued, ranging over a wide range of views, which the Attorney-General refocused by saying, "not to stifle the inquiry which the public and the press throughout the country had strenuously demanded. The government was anxious to arrive at the best mode of dealing with the aboriginal race, so that no blood might needlessly be shed either on one side or the other." The Colonial Secretary said one particular matter had been broached, which was calculated to militate more than anything else against the character of the

¹⁰⁷ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 4 April 1861 p 2.

native police, the charge of murder. He felt bound in vindication to state that the attacks made on that body, especially in the press, were most cowardly and un-English. Under any circumstances such attacks were disgraceful, but they were particularly so in reference to a body of men who voluntarily risked their lives in defence of the country.¹⁰⁸ This attack on the press drew the inevitable backlash from the *Courier*:

We cannot congratulate the House upon their choice of a Select Committee to enquire into the organization and management of the Native Police Force; we all know how entirely one sided it is. We feel inclined to ask what amount of impartiality in calling witnesses, taking evidence, and framing a report, can be expected from a committee composed of Messrs Mackenzie, Fitzsimmons, Gore, Moffatt, Blakeney, Royds, Watts, and Ferrett? In the matter of enquiry into the charges of wanton cruelty recently brought so frequently against the force, it would be too much to expect, from a committee so composed, "even-handed justice." We scarcely imagine that the Colonial Secretary's comments of "the cowardly and un-English attacks upon men who voluntarily risk their lives in defence of their country," will tend much to promote government interference with the manly sports of the young lieutenants, whose chivalry has caused so much uneasiness and trouble to Dr Challinor, the Messrs Mortimer, and others.¹⁰⁹

A "breach of privilege" was brought forward by Mr Watts (the member for Drayton and Toowoomba). He said the above article was an insult to the House and he would like to have the printer and publisher of this article called to the bar of the House in order to account for his contempt, but it was ultimately withdrawn by Mr Watts at the suggestion of Messrs Macalister, Lilley, R Cribb and others who spoke in opposition to it.¹¹⁰

The Colonial Treasurer drew to the attention of the House that a witness, William Henry Walsh had been summoned before the native police committee, but refused his attendance. Mr. Walsh had written a note in reply, refusing to attend and stating he was unwilling to travel over 200 miles to appear before a select committee whose constitution had caused so much animadversion outside the House, and whose impartiality must be at least questionable. Mr. Lilley moved: That the conduct of William Henry Walsh merits the severest reprobation of the House; and that the above resolution be communicated to his Excellency. The resolution was put and passed without a division.¹¹¹ In a letter from Degilbo bearing the date of 17 June 1861, to the Colonial Secretary, Wm. Henry Walsh resigned his Commission as a Justice of the Peace.¹¹²

On or about 6 July 1861, ENV Morisset, Commandant of Native Police Force advised the select committee that he had resigned because he was obliged to reside at Rockhampton, but his wife's health would not allow of her remaining there. As a result, Lieutenant John O'Connell Bligh became Acting Commandant of the Native Police, and Second Lieutenant FW Carr, was made first Lieutenant in command of the 3rd division Native Police.¹¹³

The select committee on the Native Police reported to the House on 17 July 1861. The press continued their negative coverage of the report "... the whole of the evidence tends to prove that, as a police force, instituted with a view of carrying out the law against the black subjects of the Queen, the present native police force is not worth a rap." Lieutenant Wheeler was singled out for his gung-ho attitude "... looks upon himself as a military officer, and the whole of the blacks in

¹⁰⁸ North Australian, Ipswich and General Advertiser 3 May 1861 p 3.

¹⁰⁹ The above is abridged, MBC 7 May 1861 p 2.

¹¹⁰ MBC 9 May p 2, 14 May 1861 p 3, 5; Darling Downs Gazette 16 May 1861 p3; Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 16 May 1861 p 1, 30 May 1861 p 2; & Courier 27 May 1861 p 2.

¹¹¹ Hansard LA 11 June 1861; Courier 17 June 1861 p 2. See also Parliamentary Privileges Act 1861.

¹¹² Courier 24 June 1861 p 2. See Courier 9 July 1861 p 2 accepting Walsh's resignation.

¹¹³ Courier 15 July 1861 p 2.

the country as under martial law, it is easy to understand how he should coolly tell the committee that ‘there is no other way than surrounding the camps and shooting innocent gins by mistake. It is easy to understand too, how he should send back his warrants to headquarters, and avow that he is ‘not supposed’ to carry them because they might be lost, and ‘besides I could not execute a warrant’.” The *Courier* finally wound up its critique on the report with: “It is excruciatingly funny to witness the apparent solicitude of the chairman for the souls of the aborigines, and to see how cleverly each member of the committee extracted as much as he wanted from the doubtful witnesses, and no more. And the investigation partook of the inquisitorial, too.”¹¹⁴ The report was carried in the Legislative Assembly on 25 July 1861 with only Dr Challinor dissenting and carried in the Legislative Council by a 9 to 3 vote on 30 July 1861. The full report is set out at Appendix C. Then after an incredible amount of editorialising the *Courier* deliver it coup de grâce:

To show that the Assembly were not justified in adopting the report of the committee, we have gone further into the evidence upon which that report was based. We have shown that by the selection of witnesses, and the method adopted of questioning them, the committee heaped up a quantity of evidence in support of the superior efficiency of a native force; and we have seen what sort of efficiency they sought to prove. We have further proved that they were a black committee, by showing that they accorded a very different treatment to the witnesses who did not approve of a black force; that these were alternately bothered and bullied. That when they came to the enquiry into the conduct of Lieutenant Wheeler in shooting blacks at Fassifern, into the conduct of Mr. Hardie giving his evidence before a magistrate, into the conduct of Lieutenant Bligh in respect to the massacre at Maryborough, they showed in every instance a desire to exonerate these men from the grave charges which had been brought against them; that they utterly failed in the attempt; that their very caution betrayed them; and that in each of these cases, they left the matter worse than they found it.¹¹⁵

A Mr Henry Babbit gave evidence on 17 May 1861 before the above select committee:

8. Do you know his name? He was called Gulliver.

12. What was he doing? He was in custody of a party of draymen—they had secured him.

13. Where did you see him next? After I had been there half-an-hour, or perhaps an hour, the Native Police came up; they had been in pursuit of him for some time, and the draymen had captured him. The Native Police then put him into the carriage that I was travelling with. He had been intoxicated by the draymen when they took him, and quite stupefied with liquor. He was bound hand and foot.

14. How was he bound? His arms were fastened behind him with a cord, and the same cord was fastened round his legs, which were drawn up so as to form a sort of triangle. That was done by the draymen. When he was put into the carriage his legs were unfastened, but his arms were still bound. The party then formed a guard round the prisoner. There were two or three white men from the Calliungal Station, and the Native Police and their officers, Lieut. Powell and Cadet Genatas—quite a formidable party altogether. They formed a guard behind, and a guard in advance, and one of them was in the carriage with the prisoner. We then drove about four miles to a scrub. The station we started from lies about three miles off the main road, and when we got to the junction of the main road with the station road, they took Gulliver out of the carriage and put him under a tree.

15. Who put him under the tree? The police.

16. Did anyone order them to do so? The officers of the police put him there themselves; I dare say the troopers assisted them. He was thoroughly stupefied with drink. The party belonging to the station then drove up with me to the Calliungal Station.

17. What became of Gulliver after that? I knew nothing further until a few minutes afterwards the Native Police arrived at the station without their prisoner. When they took him out of the carriage, they said they were going to make him walk. They might have had the use of my carriage as far as

¹¹⁴ *Courier* 24 July 1861 p 3 & 25 July 1861 p 2.

¹¹⁵ The *Courier* ran lengthy editorials critical of the report; see 31 July 1861 p 2, 5 Aug 1861 p 2, 6 Aug p 2, 7 Aug p 2, 12 Aug p 2, 15 Aug p 2, 20 Aug p 2, 22 Aug p 2, 29 Aug p 2, 6 Sep p 2, 9 Sep p 2 & 12 Sep 1861 p 2.

the station, if they had wished. I think one of the Native Police came up first, and my impression was that he had merely come up for supplies, or something of the sort. I asked him what they were going to do with Gulliver, and he said, "He no keep away any more." Very soon afterwards the rest of the party came up.

18. Did you afterwards ascertain the fact—whether Gulliver had been disposed of or not? I said nothing further about it, but I knew from that, that he had been killed. I did not ascertain anything further. It was such a short time from my arrival at the station until the Native Police came up, that there was not time for Gulliver to have come to himself and to have made any attempt to escape.

47. Will you answer what I asked you directly, instead of waiving the question by explanations, what was your reason for concluding that Gulliver had been shot? I have given you my reasons; there did not appear to me to have been time for him to have recovered and make his escape; and the blackfellow told me "that he wouldn't get away again;" and then the police did not return to the place again, for I saw their tracks, and know that they went a different way.

Balanced against the above evidence of Mr Babbit's is that of Commandant Morisset also given at the above select committee:

24. Who was the officer in charge of him? Lieutenant Powell.

25. Did he report to you that Gulliver was well secured, and in a state of insensibility from drink, and put into a person's carriage? He told me he had been carried and bound hand and foot, but that he as only feigning intoxication.

26. And this took off the attention of the troopers, and he thus attempted to make his escape? The troopers had been sent away to procure rations, and Mr. Powell, and I think another officer and trooper, were left alone with Gulliver; he said the rope was cutting his feet, and they took it off; he then attempted to escape, and Lieutenant Powell, or the trooper with him, shot him.

The *Courier* of 9 September 1861, on the basis of Mr Babbit's evidence, raised the question of whether Gulliver was murdered by Powell rather than killed escaping lawful custody. The 1861 select committee found as follows:

Touching the murder of Fanny Briggs by Troopers of the Native Police, it does not appear to your Committee that this unfortunate occurrence militates in any way against the Force. The detachment was stationed too near the Town of Rockhampton, which gave facilities for procuring liquor. The Troopers were on friendly terms with this young woman, and, by the evidence of the Commandant, Mr. Morisset, it will be seen that she promised Toby, one of the Troopers, a bottle of grog if he found the horses belonging to the station. On the day after this note was written she was murdered. Instances of rape and murder resulting from the influence of liquor, have occurred when the aborigines committing such excesses have not been members of the Police Force.

In what has become known as the Fassifern incident, Lieutenant Fred. Wheeler and a detachment of native police under his command, on 24 December 1860, were alleged to have murdered three aboriginals; and that John Hardie, grazier of Fassifern, was cognizant of this fact, yet endeavoured to prevent a judicial inquiry into the cause of the death of the said aboriginals by falsely asserting that no blacks had been shot on his station. These allegations arose out a coronial inquiry conducted by Henry Challinor, JP, Ipswich.¹¹⁶ The 1861 select committee found as follows:

Lieutenant Wheeler appears to have acted with indiscretion on his late visit to the Logan and Fassifern. Your Committee recommend that he should be reprimanded, and removed to another district: were it not that in other respects he is a most valuable and zealous Officer, they would feel it their duty to recommend his dismissal.

¹¹⁶ The reader is referred to the North Australian, Ipswich and General Advertiser 19 February 1861 p 4 & Courier 16 August 1861 p 2.

Following on from the Fassifern incident, Morisset found himself embroiled in another alleged outrage committed by the Native Police, known as the Manumbar incident:

T & A Mortimer, 22 February 1861 to the Officer in Command of the Party of Native Police, who shot and wounded some Blacks on the Station of Manumbar, on Sunday, 10 February.

If in future you should take a fancy to bring your troopers upon the Station of Manumbar on a sporting excursion we shall feel obliged if you would either bag or bury the game which you shoot, as it is far from pleasant for us to have the decomposing remains of four or five blackfellows laying unburied within a mile or two of our head station. If you will do neither please be kind enough to remove the corpses from waterholes near the head station from which we sometimes use water for culinary purposes. As most of the blacks you left dead on our run were feeble old men, some of them apparently not less than eighty years of age, will you please to inform us whether these hoary sinners are the parties chiefly engaged in spearing bullocks and "cramming monkeys," &c.; or whether you just shoot them because the younger ones are too nimble for you. Besides the four or five you left dead on our run, you have wounded two of our station blacks, who have been in our employment during lambing, washing, and shearing, and all other busy times for the last, eight or nine years, and we have never known either of them to have been charged with a crime of any kind. One of them came to the station with a bullet wound through one of his thighs, another through one of his arms, and another through one of his hands; the other had a bullet wound through one of his arms. These blacks, being in our employment, very naturally look to us for protection from such outrages, and we are of opinion that when you shoot and wound blacks in such an indiscriminate manner, you exceed your commission, and we publish this that those who employ and pay you may have some knowledge of the way in which you perform your services.¹¹⁷

The 1861 select committee found as follows:

With respect to the affray at Mr. Mortimer's, it appears that the detachment of Police stationed at Maryborough was most improperly handed over by the Officer in charge, Lieutenant Murray, to Second Lieutenant RR Morisset, a young officer newly appointed, unacquainted with his duties, and also with the Troopers placed under his control. It also appears by the evidence that the natives had been committing depredations in that neighbourhood for some time previous, and that the assistance of the Police had been demanded. It is likewise shown by Mr. Morisset's report that they attacked the Police in the first instance. After a careful consideration of the evidence in this case, your Committee recommend that Lieutenant (John) Murray should be removed from the Force, both on this account, and his general unfitness for his duties.

Lieutenant John Murray's Rely to the Findings of Select Committee.

Sir, Will you favour me by inserting the following in your journal? In his evidence before the select committee, Mr. Morisset, late commandant of the native police, is made to say at question 74, "How long has Lieutenant Murray been in the force? Answer—About five years," I beg to state that my appointments, both as lieutenant of the native police and Justice of the Peace, date from January 1st, 1852, and during that time, I have been stationed in five new districts, viz., Wide Bay, Burnett, Upper Dawson, Port Curtis, and Leichhardt; and that the intemperance imputed to me never for one moment prevented me from doing my duty either as magistrate or officer of police. You must admit, Sir, that during my rambles, extending over a period of about ten years, and through five new districts, I must have picked up some experience of the aborigines, both in the force and out of it; and I cannot understand the reason of my not being allowed to give evidence on the subject in Brisbane.

With reference to the affair at the Messrs. Mortimer's station, I deny that Second-Lieutenant Morisset was "unacquainted with his duties, and also with the troopers placed under his control." Mr. E. V. Morisset's evidence bears me out in this, and I think the fact of the police having been

¹¹⁷ MBC 16 March 1861 p 3; Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 28 March 1861 p 3.

attacked in the first instance, and second Lieutenant Morisset bringing them out of the affair so well, also proves that I was right. I most certainly should not have sent any young officer on such a duty who happened to come this way. My report to the Commandant ought to have been referred to. There is no proof whatever of my "general unfitness for my duties."

I may crave further indulgence from you in a short time; and depend upon it, Sir, not for my own sake, but for that of others, I shall not flinch from publishing, if necessary, the whole of my career in the public service. Your obedient servant, John Murray, Lieutenant Native Police. Maryborough, Wide Bay, August 22.¹¹⁸

John O'Connell Bligh, Esq, who had received a commission as Supernumerary Captain in the Queensland Volunteer Corps, was confirmed as the Commandant of the Native Police Force in September 1861.¹¹⁹

The year of 1861 as the above reveals might be considered a watershed in terms of settler Aborigine relations given that on the face of it, the Governor considered it necessary to improve the conditions of the Aborigines and to increase the discipline and efficiency of this necessary protective force, the Native Police. Although the press was critical of the 1861 select committee, the work had been done and it seemed that a new era of frontier relations had been ushered in. Of course, for any greenhorn who might have read the papers of the day, the obvious question was, why no Aborigines were called to give evidence about the frontier from their side of the fence. Well to the uninitiated, the select committee, to give them credit, did call Mr James Davis aka Duramboi, an escaped convict who had spent fourteen years with the wild Aborigines of coastal Queensland. As to his qualifications, when asked: "Consequently, you must know a good deal of the habits, customs, and language of the natives? He replied, I ought, and I do so." This certainly satisfied the committee.

To an old hand it was obvious why Aborigines were not called before the committee because they could neither speak English nor read and write. Moreover, they had no understanding of the British system or the Christian way of life. To the modern reader, this view is perhaps extreme and undoubtedly unfair. The modern principle of social justice would dictate they be given a seat at the table and be heard. After all we allow people to immigrate to Australia, who can neither speak English nor read and write English (and never will), and most definitely do not believe in the Australian way of government and life. Notwithstanding, no Aborigines appeared before the committee; matters continued on as before and believe it or not, the Aborigines continued to be troublesome.

Notwithstanding these outrages, the *pièce de résistance* was delivered after luncheon on 17 October 1861 at Cullin-la-Ringo, while the station was having an afternoon nap. The station was located just south of the Tropic of Capricornia near the town of Springsure. Horatio S. Wills owned and operated the Cullin-la-Ringo station of more than 10,000 sheep, with a total area of 260 square kilometres (64,000 acres). Those killed were Horatio Wills; David Baker, the overseer; his wife, Mrs Catherine Baker; their son, David Baker, Jnr; the overseer's daughter, Elizabeth Baker (aged 19); Iden Baker (a young boy); an infant Baker (8 months old); George Elliott; Patrick Mannion; his wife, Mrs Mannion; their three children (Mary Ann Mannion, 8 years old; Maggie Mannion, 4 years old; and baby Mannion, an infant); Edward McCormac; Charles Weeden; James Scott; Henry Pickering; George Ling; and a bullock driver known as Tom O'Brien (who had been engaged at Rockhampton). This event, the Hornet Bank massacre of white settlers, stands in the unsung annals of our history and culture as a monstrous act of primitive atrocity and savagery, little acknowledged and most definitely rarely remembered. There is no equivalent memorial in

¹¹⁸ Courier 17 September 1861 p 2.

¹¹⁹ Courier 23 September 1861 p 2.

Australia like The Battle of Blood River monument in South Africa, which celebrates the battle fought between 470 Voortrekkers (Pioneers), led by Andries Pretorius and an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Zulu on the bank of the Ncome River on 16 December 1838. What are we to make of the Wills' massacre from a cultural and historical perspective? Did it further or advance the aspirations of either side? There was no summit of government, settlers and Aborigines with a view to the resolution of any differences or grievances that may have existed between the parties as this massacre might have signalled to an observant bystander. The 1861 Select Committee had reported on 17 July 1861 and found inter alia:

The evidence, taken by your Committee shows beyond doubt that all attempts to Christianise or educate the aborigines of Australia have hitherto proved abortive. Except in one or two isolated cases, after being brought up and, educated, for a certain period, the Natives of both sexes invariably return to their savage habits. Credible witnesses shew that they are addicted to cannibalism; that they have no idea of a future state; and are sunk in the lowest depths of barbarism.¹²⁰

What the Aborigines thought of the matter remains a mystery but the following propositions may offer some insight into the brutal killings at Cullin-la-Ringo. In 2006, H Reynolds suggested the killings were as the result of, "The Aborigines determined on revenge."¹²¹ In 2013, Reynolds gives no explanation of the event but includes it in his chapter "What Kind of Warfare" which suggests the killings were an act of war.¹²² At the 150 years anniversary of the massacre, Reynolds said: "I think warfare is a much better way to see it, because there were large questions at stake over who would own the country, who would have control over the country, and it's those larger questions that determine whether it was war."¹²³

Mr Horatio Wills' intention was to set up and operate a sheep station for the purposes of growing wool and selling the product on the British market. He obtained the necessary permits and licences from the government of the day and at no stage was he warned or given notice that he was entering a war zone. Not that a state of war had been declared between the white settlers and the Aborigines in the colony of Queensland. He would have been aware of the presence of myall or wild blacks not only in the area he was to take up his run but also that he would have to travel through possible hostile groups of blacks. He was well armed but seems to have adopted a positive and sympathetic approach to the blacks in his dealings with them. He probably was aware that the Queensland government maintained a Native Police force to protect the frontier and that he would fall within their operational areas. There are no actions by Wills or his party to suggest he had offended the Aborigines. There is some suggestion in hindsight that his omissions may have led to his downfall i.e. failing to keep an adequate and proper lookout. Notwithstanding Mr Wills' apparent innocence, operating within his area of interest was at least three other pastoral stations Bauhinia Downs, Albinia Downs and Rainworth Station his nearest neighbour. Rainworth was under the supervision of Jesse Gregson who had taken over the station in June 1861. Mr Alfred Patrick of the Native Police visited Rainworth about the end of June and Gregson found it necessary to call upon Patrick to recover some of his sheep which had been missed by the shepherd. They found the missing sheep in the possession of the Kairi and as a consequence, rushed the blacks wounding two Kairi who subsequently died¹²⁴ probable cause for revenge on the unsuspecting Wills's family. Notwithstanding this, indiscriminate revenge killings by Aborigines, whatever the original insult may have been is not a defence, excuse or justification of murder.

¹²⁰ See Appendix C for full report.

¹²¹ Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier*, 2006 p 86.

¹²² Reynolds, *Forgotten War*, 2013 p 93.

¹²³ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-10/wills-massacre-marked-turning-point-australian-history/7919894>; the reader is asked peruse: *Inside the Killing Fields Hornet Bank, Cullin-la-Ringo & The Maria Wreck*, by Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane, 2020 for a complete analysis of the Cullin-la-Ringo incident.

¹²⁴ Reid G., *From Hornet Bank to Cullin-La-Ringo*, Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Brisbane, 28 May 1981.

What was the aftermath of this massacre? Governor Bowen summed it for the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Colonies as follows:

6. ... Lieutenant Cave's report to his Commanding Officer states that he had followed up the tracks of the murderers for four days, when he came up with them on the 28th October. After a skirmish in broken ground, during which several were killed "the remainder retreated to the top of a high hill, the front of which was almost perpendicular, and on our riding nearer the Blacks gave us to understand most unmistakeably their intention of holding their ground. I retired," continues Lieutenant Cave, "a sufficient distance to be completely out of their sight and camped. Towards sundown, knowing the Blacks to be still in the same position I proceeded cautiously with the Troopers on foot. Two I posted in front of the hill, and with the others I climbed quietly to the top at the back. A shot from one of my men was the first intimation the Blacks had of our approach; when finding themselves surprised and near surrounded; they made no stand. Their loss was heavy, and I consider that many were killed from falling over the cliffs. Here I recovered a pistol and much property that had been brought from Mr. Wills' station." Though the wild blacks must have outnumbered their disciplined countrymen of the Police detachment by at least six or seven to one the spears, boomerangs, and waddies of the former (dangerous weapons as they are) are no match at close quarters for the carbines and sabres which make amends for the disparity of numbers.¹²⁵

In the newly opened district of Kennedy reports flooded in:

The natives are numerous and hostile, and our native police have come into collision with them several times. Several of the native police absconded a few weeks ago, and have not since been heard of. They took nothing with them. A party recently returned from the interior (and) state that they found the Aborigines in the act of roasting a human body, and human bones with the flesh partly eaten off have been seen in several of their camps. Thus, proving beyond a doubt, that they are cannibals.¹²⁶

The crew of the ketch, *Ellida*, which brought the mail to Port Denison, were murdered by blacks at Shaw Islands, Whitsunday.¹²⁷

Lieutenant Powell had been absent a good many days trying to affect the clearance of Mr Sellheim's run, which was situated somewhere on the Bowen river, the natives having proved rather troublesome.¹²⁸

Then there was the interesting case of Mr WC Giles' blackboy, James Elliott, aka Jemmy. Jemmy was christened, partly educated, and could speak English well, and was a great favourite with Mr Giles:

He, with another boy of Mr Giles', was in camp near a sheep station in the neighbourhood of Manumbar (Mortimer's), when they were set upon by five or six blacks, who instantly killed Jemmy. The other escaped by diving into a waterhole, after receiving some very severe wounds. Subsequently, two Aborigines named Jemmy and Lazy Johnny were charged at the Police Office with the murder of James Elliott. It came out in the evidence of Mr Mortimer however, that the boy had been out with the Native Police, and I believe was with them at the slaughter on Manumbar Station (see above). There being nothing but black evidence the case was necessarily dismissed.¹²⁹

As if the Aborigines had not caused enough stir, Mr Bilbi, of the Bush Inn, Fassifern, succeeded, in capturing the blackfellow Georgie, who had violently assaulted and attempted to ravish Mrs

¹²⁵ Bowen to Newcastle, Despatch 74, 16 December 1861. [QSA GOV/23].

¹²⁶ Courier 24 June 1861 p 3.

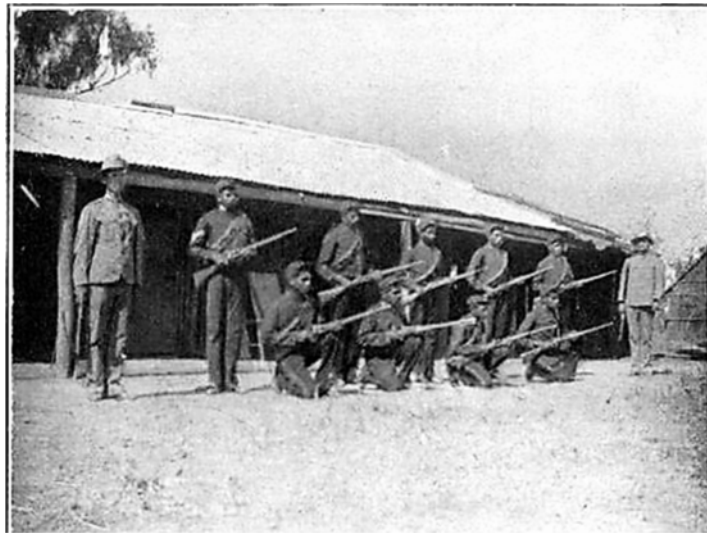
¹²⁷ Courier 30 September 1861 p 3. H Irving, passenger and N Millar of the crew were murdered by the blacks.

¹²⁸ Courier 23 December 1861 p 3.

¹²⁹ Courier 15 October 1861 p 2, 2 November 1861 p 2 & Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 21 November 1861 p 2.

Queensland Native Police

Ryan near Ipswich. Georgie was found guilty of rape at the assizes, and was executed within the precincts of the Brisbane gaol on 12 December 1861 for the rape of Bridget Ryan at Little Ipswich. He did not deny his guilt and attributed it to the effects of drink.¹³⁰



Haydon, A. L., The trooper police of Australia

¹³⁰ Courier 18 December 1861 p 4.

1862

Thus 1861 ended with a bang and 1862 began with the best intentions. As to the Nogoa (Wills') massacre, Mr. Ferrett asked the Colonial Secretary what was to be done? The Colonial Secretary replied, "An outer line of stations from north to south was being formed on the Peak Downs, Comet, Nogoa, and Victoria; and an inner line at Collaroy, Rockhampton, the Upper Dawson, Lower Dawson, and Mackenzie, and Mimosa Creek."¹³¹

Another very interesting case to arise during this period involved the hero of the Cullin-la-Ringo massacre of whites, Second Lieutenant William Cave of the Native Police. Perhaps the reader may recall Governor Bowen's despatch of 16 December 1861 to the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Colonies where it is recorded, Cave's valiant clash with the offending blacks and their subsequent pacification.¹³² Commandant Bligh handed to Cave for execution a warrant, dated 22 March 1862, authorising the arrest of one "Dogskin," and two other aborigines, whose names were unknown. Cave then proceeded to apprehend such Aborigines alluded to in that warrant, although he had no knowledge of either person named in the warrant. For that purpose, he went to Mr. Cameron's station, in the district of Planet Downs. On 28 July 1862, upon his arrival on the station, Cave attempted to arrest a blackboy, whose name was "Peter." Cave showed the warrant to Mr. Cameron. The blackboy was at that time seated a few yards from the house outside. Cave did not succeed in arresting the boy. Richard Miller was present when Cave showed the warrant to Mr. Cameron, who said Cave, should do his duty. Cave then proceeded to take Peter into custody, to see if he could be identified as a guilty party, when Miller shoved himself between Cave and the boy, to prevent Cave taking the black. In doing so, Miller pushed one of the troopers to one side, and took the boy into the house. Finding the door shut and Miller inside trying to close it, Cave pushed it open. The door was not fastened. He got inside the door and immediately received a blow from Miller's fist. Cave collared him and they had a struggle.

Richard Miller, was indicted for that on 28 July 1862, at Planet Downs, he beat, wound, and ill-treat, one William Cave, an officer of the Queensland Native Police, whilst the latter was in the execution of his duty. Miller was also charged with obstructing Mr. Cave in the execution of his duty, and preventing him from lawfully apprehending a person charged with the offence of sheep-stealing, against whom a warrant had been issued. A further count on the indictment charged the defendant with common assault upon the said William Cave.

Under Mr Lilley's cross-examination, Cave answered as follows:

Mr. Lilley: Now, sir, tell us if you please what the duties of a Native Police Officer are?

Witness: He has various duties to perform. His principal duty is to keep the blacks in order.

Mr. Lilley: Keep the blacks in order! And how does he do so, sir? Does he not always go after them with fire-arms?

Witness: He is sometimes armed, but not always.

Mr. Lilley: Are not his troopers always armed?

Witness: Yes, they carry arms.

Mr. Lilley: And they are savages like the unfortunate wretches they hunt, whom they shoot down without mercy. Is it not so, sir?

Witness: No, they are civilised blacks.

Mr. Lilley (emphatically): Civilised blacks, Sir! What do you mean? Can they read?

Witness: No.

Mr. Lilley: Or write?

¹³¹ Legislative Assembly, 9 January 1862. The reader is invited to consult: *Inside the Killing Fields Hornet Bank, Cullin-la-Ringo & The Maria Wreck* by Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane, 2020.

¹³² Bowen to Newcastle, Despatch 74, 16 December 1861. [QSA GOV/23]; see previous pages above.

Witness: No.

Mr. Lilley: Now, is it not a fact that the blacks when thus hunted are driven into the scrubs?

Witness: They generally take to the scrub.

Mr. Lilley: And that the troopers are thereupon sent in after them, and there shoot them?

Witness: They don't shoot them. They are sent after them.

Mr. Lilley: And does the officer go into the scrub with the troopers?

Witness: He goes in sometimes. I have occasionally done so myself.

The witness in his further examination said:—To my knowledge, I never heard of the aboriginal "Dogskin" mentioned in the warrant; I have never been sworn as a peace officer or constable; or have taken any oath as an officer of the force; when I entered upon my duties I received a copy of certain printed instructions.

By His Honour: I had no knowledge of Peter before going there; and did not know him by sight.

His Honour, the Chief Justice, in his address to the jury said, if a constable apprehended a person wrongfully, he might justify himself by showing that he had a reasonable suspicion for making the arrest, although even if it eventually turned out that no crime at all had been committed. The Attorney-General had, he thought, very properly, withdrawn the fact of Mr. Cave being a duly constituted peace-officer, and relied his case more on the assault committed by the defendant and resistance offered by him to the arrest of a suspected criminal. His Honour now came to the question of the position in which Mr. Cave stood at the time. If he were a private person it was clear he had no grounds of justification, for there was no proof that the alleged sheep-stealing had actually taken place. They would now, therefore, confine their attention to the warrant, for apart from it his (Mr. Cave's) justification was at end. The warrant was addressed to all peace-officers, including the officers of the native police. Since Cave gave evidence of, "I had no knowledge of Peter before going there; and did not know him by sight." It could not be said that Cave was executing the warrant. All he was doing was using the warrant to arrest random Aborigines "to see if he could be identified as a guilty party"; therefore, Miller could resist Cave. Thus, Miller was found not guilty. William Cave left the Native Police on 27 December 1862 to take up the appointment of Clerk of Petty Sessions at Princhester and subsequently, transferred to Clermont as Clerk of Petty Sessions.¹³³

Maranoa for a time, in the early days of the Moreton Bay settlement, was a hotspot for Aboriginal depredations requiring the then Commandant of the Native Police, Frederick Walker, to expend a considerable amount of operational effort to quieten the area. It still remained an operational area in 1862. On or about 10 October 1861, a party of native police under the command of Lieutenant Marlow, were engaged in erecting new barracks about thirty miles beyond the Maranoa. The main portion of the men was out in the bush, cutting bark, three only remaining with Lieutenant Marlow at the camp. Early in the afternoon about thirty blacks were observed to reconnoitre the camp, and then retire into the adjacent scrub. Shortly after their departure the absent troopers returned, and at sundown about eighty fully armed blacks came opposite the gunyah into which the troopers had retired on their return. Lieut. Marlow at once went to them, and demanding their business, was informed that they wanted to corroborree with the police. Marlow refused and ordered the blacks to leave the vicinity of the camp. On this one of them attempted to wrest the carbine from him, and whilst raising it in self-defence, another black felled Marlow with a nullah nullah. The troopers at once rushed out and fired on the assailants, thirteen of whom were killed and wounded, the remainder making a precipitate retreat. Apprehending a renewal of the attack, a messenger was despatched to Lieut. Moorhead for assistance.¹³⁴

Then in early August 1862, the *Courier* reported that a huge party of Aborigines had made an incursion onto the station of Messrs Moray and Co a few days earlier, murdered a shepherd, and

¹³³ The full trial is at Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser Supplement 11 April 1863 p 1.

¹³⁴ Courier 28 November 1861 p 2.

drove away the sheep which were in his charge. The *Courier* attributed the Aborigines' actions to the absence of Morehead who they said had been in the Maranoa district for four years, and had succeeded in keeping it quiet by a milder course of action than that too frequently pursued by officers of the Native Police force. However, the record suggests that Morehead had been up on the Nogoia at Cullin-la-Ringo at the time. Moreover, a local wrote to the *Courier* as follows:

It is not correct or fair in your informant to say that, owing to the withdrawal of Lieut. Morehead from the command of the Maranoa police, this incursion of blacks is due. I doubt if Lieutenant Morehead was ever on the Maranoa, or in command of the police force there. He could not, therefore, claim the merit of keeping that district in order. We are perfectly satisfied with Lieutenant Marlow, and his mode of dealing with the blacks, and pray that he may not be removed to the still more remote and dangerous neighbourhood of the Warrego.¹³⁵

By May 1862, the government had decided to regulate the various forms of police under one person to control the management and finances of all branches of police by introducing the Police Regulation Bill. However, the motion for the second reading of the bill was lost.¹³⁶



¹³⁵ *Courier* 5 August 1862 p 2.

¹³⁶ Legislative Assembly, 20 May 1862.

Queensland Native Police

The Native Police establishment for 1862, colony-wide was as follows:¹³⁷

Location	Rank	Name	Date of Appointment#
	Commandant	J O'C Bligh	10 July 1861
	Cadet	RCG Johnson	30 September 1861
	Cadet	TI Westby	27 January 1862
	Cadet	W Sharpe	17 February 1862
	Cadet	MN Richardson	18 February 1862
	Cadet	A Beevor	18 February 1862
	Cadet	WH Bayley	3 March 1862
	Cadet	GT Price	30 May 1862
	Cadet	H Ramsey	24 June 1862
	Cadet	PT Flanagan	5 August 1862
	Cadet	IB Nutting	1 October 1862
	Cadet	ID Harris	1 October 1862
	Cadet	M Armstrong	24 December 1862
	Cadet	R Freudenthal	24 December 1862
Port Curtis & Leichhardt	Lieut. Cmding 1 st Div.	GPM Murray	23 January 1862
	2 nd Lieut.	JT Baker	1859
	2 nd Lieut.	RR Morisset	12 August 1860
	2 nd Lieut.	AMG Patrick	12 August 1860
	2 nd Lieut.	SG Genatas	1 February 1861
	2 nd Lieut.	W Cave	12 August 1861
	2 nd Lieut.	IS Williams	12 August 1861
	2 nd Lieut.	RCG Johnson	8 April 1862
	2 nd Lieut.	WH Bayley	8 April 1862
	2 nd Lieut.	A Beevor	24 December 1862
	2 nd Lieut.	MN Richardson	24 December 1862
	Sergeant-Major	W Allen	
	Camp Sergeants	Six (6)	
	Troopers	Seventy-two (72)	
Wide Bay & Burnett	Lieut. Cmding 2 nd Div.	JT Baker	18 February 1862
	2 nd Lieut.	CJ Blakeney	5 October 1860
	Camp Sergeant	One (1)	
	Troopers	Eighteen (18)	
Maranoa & Condamine	Lieut. Cmding 3 rd Div.	F W Carr	10 July 1861
	2 nd Lieut.	W Moorhead	1 July 1857
	2 nd Lieut.	J Marlow	5 October 1860
	Camp Sergeant	Two (2)	
	Troopers	Thirty-six (36)	
Moreton Bay	2 nd Lieut. Cmding 4 th Div.	F Wheeler	1 June 1858
	Camp Sergeant	One (1)	
	Troopers	Eight (8)	
Kennedy	Lieut. Cmding 5 th Div.	W Powell	5 October 1860
	Camp Sergeant	Three (3)	
	Troopers	Twenty (20)	

Date of taking up the officer's current posting, not his seniority date.

¹³⁷ Statistical Register of Queensland for 1862 p 28.

1863

A most interesting case arose involving Joseph Donald Harris, Second Lieutenant of Native Police. He was on patrol from Mingo to Yenda, when he met a certain black known as Jemmy, who, accompanied by his gin, was employed carrying a Chainman's swag. On arrival at Yenda, Harris met GW Elliott. Harris said he was looking for deserters from the force and asked if there were any blacks about and their character. Elliott replied there were no blacks about the station and that the character of the blacks in the neighbourhood was good. He also mentioned Jemmy and his gin, who was a very quiet black. Harris added he was out in search of blacks and had no warrants with him. On 17 April 1863, Harris proceeded to Mingo. On 18 April 1863, Elliott heard from his overseer that a blackfellow had been killed at Mingo. On 20 April, Elliott went to Mingo with the Coroner, and he there saw the dead body of the quiet black, Jemmy, in a shallow grave, with a bullet wound under the right collar bone, and with his knees cut and bare, as if the skin had been hacked about. Harris was charged with having on 17 April 1863, on the road between Yendah and Mingo, murdered, by shooting, or causing to be shot, one Jemmy, an aboriginal. A magisterial inquiry was held by Michael Haynes, PM, the honourable BB Moreton, JP; and William H Holt, JP. Harris was discharged by the bench. The matter was investigated by the government and Michael Haynes was cashiered as a magistrate and Harris dismissed from the Native Police. Harris's report of the matter was treated as a privileged communication and thus could not be used against him, was as follows:

J. Donald Harris, Second Lieutenant, 24 April 1863 to Lieutenant Murray, commanding 1st Division N. M. Police, Rockhampton.

... during my last patrol, endeavouring to execute the warrants against several blacks that I held, I ran the tracks of a black from Ideraway towards Mingo, on the River Burnett. Having obtained information that, he was a black called Jemmy, for whom I held a warrant for murder, I proceeded to execute the warrant.

When I thought we were drawing near the fugitive, I sent one trooper on ahead to run the tracks (with orders to stop, until I came up with the rest of the men, when he came in sight of him), so that the noise of so many horses' feet among the stony ridges would not give the alarm, and facilitate the escape of the offender.

The trooper and the offender saw each other at the same moment, and the latter endeavoured to escape. The trooper—finding that he could not arrest him alone, and would escape before he had assistance—fired on him.

Also, at Musquet Flat, I exerted myself to the utmost to apprehend a black whom I held a warrant for. He would have escaped had I not fired on him.¹³⁸

Harris then sued GW Elliott for damages to the amount of £3000 for laying such information (murder) with malice and without reasonable or probable cause of establishing a case against the plaintiff (Harris). Harris lost the case.¹³⁹

With opening of the fifth session of Parliament on 21 April 1863, the Governor highlighted the police:

9. Your early attention is invited to the present condition of our Constabulary and Native Police Corps. The outbreak of violent crime in the adjacent colony, the probability of the discovery of new gold-fields within our own territory, the rapid influx of population, and many other circumstances, combine to prove that the time has arrived when our protective force should be placed under a

¹³⁸ Courier 17 August 1863 p 2.

¹³⁹ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 10 September 1863 p 2.

Queensland Native Police

system of organization similar to that now adopted in almost all other parts of the Empire, and calculated to ensure greater efficiency and greater economy.

On 22 July 1863, the first session of the Second Parliament of Queensland was opened and the Governor noted:

You will also be especially urged to consider the necessity of amending the constitution of the Police Force, the expenditure on account of which increases far more rapidly than its efficiency; and, in particular, to substitute for the present Native Police Force, in the more settled districts, a Mounted Police, assisted, where necessary, by aboriginal trackers.

On 6 August 1863, the Colonial Secretary introduced a Police Bill and said that the bill was identical in all its material points with the one introduced by him in a previous session. By the third clause of the bill it would be found that the office of Commandant of Native Police was done away with, and it was intended that a Commissioner of Police should be appointed, who would have the supervision of every branch of the police force, and whose salary would not be so much as that of the salary of the Commandant of Native Police. The government had thought it desirable that a large quantity of the native police in the settled districts should be done away with, seeing that their continued presence in those districts might almost be regarded as an outrage upon public opinion. Although it was perhaps only prudent to retain a certain proportion of the native police force in the outlying districts, he believed hon. members would agree with him that a white police patrol, of small numbers, but well disciplined, with two or three black trackers attached to the corps, would be much more efficient than a native police force, which was at times so difficult to control. It was, he believed, generally recognised that the present constitution of the native police force gave anything but satisfaction to the colony at large; the officers of that force were generally young men, who were not in the receipt of very much pay; the small amount of pay was, perhaps, the reason why men of matured judgment and suitable in other ways were very seldom to be found in the force.¹⁴⁰ The Colonial Secretary said that that was one of the reasons for his bringing forward the Police Bill, and that he should take such action as should bring the present state of things to an end. A clause in the end of the bill would give the government power to make such rules and regulations, having the force of law, as should prevent the recurrence of the abuses of which they had heard. (Hear, hear.) The bill passed the second reading on 20 August 1863. On 25 August 1863 the Police Bill was read a third time and passed.¹⁴¹

At Yatton, on the Isaac River, Marmaduke Richardson's Native Police detachment was alleged to have killed an unknown number of Aboriginal people. However, an inquest concluded in September 1863 that the Native Police had shot an Aboriginal man called Wallace.¹⁴² At the Rockhampton Police Court, on 12 October 1863, Marmaduke Nelson Richardson, lately an officer in the Native Police Force, was remanded to Waverley, on a charge of murdering Wallace.¹⁴³ Richardson was ultimately dismissed from the native police.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Legislative Assembly, 6 August 1863.

¹⁴¹ The legislation is set out in Appendix B.

¹⁴² QSA ID6226 QSA Ref JUS/S1 p 34.

¹⁴³ Courier 15 October 1863 p 2

¹⁴⁴ Qld Gazette Vol. IV p 829.

Chapter Three — The New Police Force

1864 The Police Act of 1863 (27 Vic. No. 11) was assented to on 21 September 1863 and came into effect on and from 1 January 1864. The Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed David Thompson Seymour, Esquire, Acting Commissioner of Police with effect 1 January 1864.¹⁴⁵ David Thompson Seymour was married on 28 January 1864 to Caroline Matilda, only daughter of W. A. Brown, Esq., Sheriff of Queensland. Seymour was described as a Lieutenant, H.M. 12th Regiment of Foot, third son of Major Seymour, of Ballymore Castle, County Galway, Ireland.

It seems Lieut. Seymour commanded a detachment of the 12th Regiment of 27 rank and file, 1 drummer, and 1 sergeant, which arrived in Brisbane on or about 13 January 1861 and were quartered in the buildings formerly known as the military barracks, and more lately as the immigration depot.¹⁴⁶ It also seems that Lieut. Seymour was not only in command of the military detachment stationed in Brisbane but was, for a time, Aide-de-camp and acting private secretary to the Governor.¹⁴⁷ On 1 July 1864, the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, appointed David Thompson Seymour, Esquire, Commissioner of Police.¹⁴⁸ The late Commandant of the Native Police, John O'Connell Bligh, Esquire, was appointed Police Magistrate, Gayndah, vice Hirst on 1 January 1864.¹⁴⁹

Pursuant to the Police Act, the following appointments were made:¹⁵⁰

Inspector G. P. M. Murray, 1st Division Native Mounted Police, Rockhampton.
Inspector R. R. Morisset, 2nd Division Native Mounted Police, Nogoa.
Inspector F. W. Carr, 3rd Division Native Mounted Police, Maranoa.
Inspector F. Wheeler, 4th Division Native Mounted Police, Moreton and Burnett
Inspector J. Marlow, 5th Division Native Mounted Police, Bowen.

SUB-INSPECTORS.

T. S. Williams, Native Mounted Police.
R. C. G. Johnson, Native Mounted Police.
A. Beevor, Native Mounted Police.
G. F. Price, Native Mounted Police.
B. S. Owen, Native Mounted Police.
Wallace P. Bayley, Native Mounted Police.
H. Brown, Native Mounted Police.

¹⁴⁵ Gazette, Vol. V. 2 January 1864. [No. 1.] p 1.

¹⁴⁶ Moreton Bay Courier 15 January 1861 p 2.

¹⁴⁷ Empire 3 June 1861 p 5.

¹⁴⁸ Gazette, Vol. V. 2 July 1864 [No. 56.] p 421.

¹⁴⁹ Gazette, Vol. V. 2 January 1864. [No. 1.] p 1.

¹⁵⁰ QPG Vol. 1. 22 July 1864 [No. 1.] p 1.

Queensland Native Police

J. B. Nutting, Native Mounted Police.
A. S. Morisset, Native Mounted Police.
R. Freudenthal, Native Mounted Police.
C. H. Lambert, Native Mounted Police.
Edward Wheeler, Native Mounted Police.

SERGEANTS NATIVE MOUNTED POLICE.

S. Stockley. W. Britton.
J. Costello. D. H. Franks.
J. Carton. W. Doherty.
P. Mahon. O. Carney.
E. P. Graham. A. Campbell.
D. Pearce. J. Crogham.
W. J. Clements. J. Sutcliffe.
C. Bigley,

Colonial expansion continued apace in 1864 with ever increasing pastoral growth on the frontier. Within the Maryborough district and hinterland, the aborigines continued in their troublesome ways. The Blacks were very busily pilfering Mr. G. Howard's cellar and Mrs. Symes' kitchen; Beames' tent was visited, but the rascals were baffled; and Sergeant Brown, of the Native Police, was robbed of several articles of apparel from the police camp.¹⁵¹ A party of timber getters were attacked on the Susan River a branch of the Mary River. The party consisted of three men named Hamilton, Harmer, and another. Whilst the latter was at Maryborough, Hamilton left his tent to go in search of their bullocks, leaving Harmer in charge. On returning to the camp a few hours afterwards he found the tent and all its contents burnt and his mate nowhere to be seen. He judged the blacks must have set fire to the tent to burn Harmer out, and then killed him. After carefully searching the neighbourhood for the body without success, Hamilton came onto Maryborough for help. Unfortunately, Sergeant Brown and the native police were on the other side of the river, which delayed the police. The timber getters had been stuck up before, and one of them had been severely wounded.¹⁵² Subsequently, Harmer turned up. He had been set upon by a large party of blacks, and had taken refuge in his humpy. They set fire to it to burn him out. The heat and smoke soon effected their purpose, but being armed with a gun the savages dared not approach him, and he continued to keep them at bay whilst he reached the cover of a scrub, and he was able to escape. However, he lost his way, and wandered in the bush for several days until he reached a party of lumberers on the Burrum River, by whom he was directed to Maryborough.¹⁵³

The bodies of two blacks were found on the Stanton Harcourt station, 55 miles north-west from Maryborough, which had been shot by bullets, and which were averred to be the bodies of the blacks Sergeant Brown had in custody when he left that station. Sergeant Brown, of the native police, was charged with neglecting to report to his superior officer that he had lately in his custody two blacks, and of what had become of them. Mr. Corfield, held an inquiry, which was deemed informal, or, perhaps, insufficient; and Mr. Hirst was directed by the Government to investigate the affair.¹⁵⁴ It was alleged that these two deceased blacks were identical with two lately seen in the custody of Sergeant Brown which were never delivered up.¹⁵⁵ Sergeant Brown was subsequently dismissed from the Native Police Force.¹⁵⁶ Lieutenant Freudenthal, with two native troopers,

¹⁵¹ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 21 May 1863 p 2.

¹⁵² Brisbane Courier 24 September 1864 p 6.

¹⁵³ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 28 September 1864 p 2.

¹⁵⁴ See QSA JUS/N8, 64/147 & 148.

¹⁵⁵ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 20 October 1864 p 4.

¹⁵⁶ Sergeant Brown's full name is unknown; it may have been George John Brown, Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 6 May 1865 p 2.

arrived at Maryborough and proceeded to the old barracks at Cooper's Plains, where the force found permanent quarters.¹⁵⁷

On 11 March 1864, the Colonial Secretary's Office published the Rules (Regulations) for the Police Force which were established by the Governor in Council, under the provisions of Act 27 Victoria, No. 11, in order that the force may be conducted upon one uniform system, and that its members may not be embarrassed in the execution of their several duties from the want of proper instructions. The regulations are a very lengthy set of rules and directions under which members of the police force are controlled and regulated by the Commissioner. Candidates, if appointed to the force, will take and subscribe, in the presence of a magistrate, the following oath, as required by the Act 27 Victoria, No. 11:¹⁵⁸

Oath: I, ... do swear that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lady the Queen in the office of constable, without favour or affection, malice or ill-will, for the period of one year from this date, and until I am legally discharged; that I will see and cause Her Majesty's peace to be kept and preserved, and that I will prevent, to the best of my power, all offences against the same; and that while I shall continue to hold the said office I will, to the best of my skill and knowledge, discharge all the duties thereof faithfully, according to law - So help me God.



¹⁵⁷ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 22 October 1864 p 2.

¹⁵⁸ Gazette Vol. V. 12 March 1864. [No. 24.] p 185

1865

The first annual report of the Queensland Police Force was dated 21 January 1865. Annex A to the report showed the distribution of the Native Police colony wide as at 31 December 1864 as follows:

Native Police

Station	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Sergeants	Troopers
Rockhampton	2		3	22
Lower Dawson				
Mackenzie River		1	1	6
Upper Dawson		1	1	3
Broad Sound		1 acting	1	5
Comet & Nogoa		2	1	13
North Creek		1 + 1 acting	1	5
Belyando		1	1	11
Bungil Creek	1	1	1	6
Maranoa River		1	1	9 ¹⁵⁹
YoYo Creek		1	1	8
Sandgate	1		1	4
Bowen	1	1	1	14
Bowen River		1	1	8
Burdekin				
Rockingham Bay		1	1	9
Maryborough		1	1	3
Total	5	13 + 2 acting	17	126

The Commissioner made the following observations of the operational activities of the Native Police:

With regard to the Native Police, the constantly increasing occupation of hitherto waste country renders it necessary that this force should be considerably augmented. As far back as the year 1857, a select committee of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales recommended as "absolutely necessary" that the force in the Northern Districts should consist of not less than one hundred, and ten (110) troopers; and I am constantly in receipt of applications for native police protection from districts which, it is hardly necessary for me to say, were then unknown; while there are but thirty (30) additional troopers on the strength of the force. It has been found inexpedient to recruit within the Colony, and I therefore recommended that an experienced officer should be dispatched for this purpose to New South Wales. Mr. John Murray, a native police officer of very great experience, was selected for this duty and in a short time succeeded, although having to contend with many unforeseen difficulties in obtaining a draft of twenty (20) smart valuable recruits. Desertion from this force might be much lessened if some fine could be imposed upon persons harbouring deserters or inducing troopers to desert.

With the arrival of the mailman from the Burdekin in Bowen late December 1864, it was learned that a shepherd in the employ of Messrs. O'Kelly and Reeve was speared by the blacks while in his hut, but was likely to recover. About fifty natives had surrounded the hut and closed him in. At Fletcher Creek (Mr. Robert Stewart's) about forty or fifty natives came into the paddock every day, while the men were engaged in putting up the stockyards and were obliged to keep sentry, and have horses ready saddled in case of emergency. The residents say — 'I wish the Government would send a party of native police here to stop amongst us, as the settlers cannot get men to remain with them'.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Included 2 troopers from the Maranoa patrol.

¹⁶⁰ North Australian 3 January 1865 p 3.

Lieutenant Marlow reported that large numbers of blacks had assembled in the vicinity of Jarvisfield station, about the middle of December 1864, coming from Rockingham Bay, Cleveland Bay, and Cape Upstart to assist at a grand "boora." They speared a mare on the station and made hostile demonstrations towards the whites, who, however, by the firm attitude they assumed, prevented the natives from committing outrages. The white force was very weak though, consisting only of Mr. and Mrs. Curley and Mr. Clibber. Lieutenant Marlow took with him the section of troopers destined to be stationed on the Upper Burdekin, and succeeded in scattering the blackfellows. The police force for the Burdekin, numbers one officer, five troopers, and eight horses, and was to be increased. Of the eleven troopers who absconded from Rockingham Bay a short time ago, three left the main body, and one of them was murdered by the natives. The other two made their way to the Burdekin, where they were concealed by a man named Reilly, who made use of their services for their rations, and induced them to remain with him by telling them they would be shot if handed over to the officer. One of the troopers moved to Inkerman, and the other moved to the Lynd with cattle. Lieutenant Marlow speaks very highly of all the black police who left Rockingham Bay, where they had "too much hard work," and is very anxious to get the two missing men, for whom he has made application.¹⁶¹

The following letter was addressed to the *Port Denison Times* from Rockingham Bay:

We are in a great strait to know what to do about the blacks, who are very bad here. We are forced to have firearms standing by us when we are at work. Within two or three miles of the town, I and my mate have been robbed twice, the blacks taking away not less than £7 worth of property. I have applied to the Inspector of Native Police, who in the first place was out in a contrary direction, not within three miles of the place, and would have given up the search; but I went to Mr. Dalrymple, who wrote to Lieutenant Blakeney. The lieutenant got a boat and went firing along the beach from the boat and actually ventured to come back on foot along the beach, wasting a few more cartridges at the wild fowls or so something else. According to our unanimous opinion he showed either great want of energy or of courage. The blacks are as bad as before, this being the only time he has ventured out of the town since he came here. If we had no police and were allowed to protect ourselves, we should be better off than we are at present.¹⁶²

Reports continued to come in regarding Sub-Inspector Blakeney. The natives were very troublesome at the Vale of Herbert and the interior. Mr. Blakeney was to start there immediately. Intelligence had been received that wool-drays were on their way from the Valley of Lagoons, and police protection was absolutely required on the route.¹⁶³ The native police had again taken French leave. The whole body decamped in early March 1865. Mr. Blakeney of course was much annoyed at this loss of his second detachment; he attributed the cause to the fact of their all being of one tribe, and recruited at the same time. Mr Blakeney started in pursuit of the runaways, but on the arrival of Mr. Inspector Murray he was summoned back, ordered south, and in a measure suspended.¹⁶⁴

In response to the above letter to the *Port Denison Times* the following was reported in the press:

Immediately on a report of the loss having been made, Lieut. Blakeney made preparations for a pursuit of the blacks, and started next morning on foot, accompanied by seven troopers. After travelling at least twenty miles, through mangrove scrubs, crossing creeks, etc., he returned to camp, and again started in a boat, intending thereby to avoid the numerous creeks and swamps. Two days

¹⁶¹ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 21 February 1865 p 2.

¹⁶² Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 21 February 1865 p 2.

¹⁶³ Brisbane Courier 25 February 1865 p 6.

¹⁶⁴ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 9 March 1865 p 2.

were spent in traversing the interior, burning camps, and "dispersing" the natives; and after all had been done that could have been done the party returned, worn out with their exertions. As to the wild fowl shooting, it is all moonshine, for not a cartridge was spent unnecessarily. And as to the want of courage attributed to Blakeney, there is not the slightest foundation whatever. Lieutenant Murray, now in this district, says that Mr. Blakeney was one of the best officers he had under him, and that his courage is indubitable. Although unfortunate in the loss of his detachment on two occasions, and resting under a cloud at present, it is but simple justice to state the bare facts, to which as an eye-witness I can myself vouch. The "our unanimous opinion" reminds one of the "Tooley-street tailors."¹⁶⁵

In late 1864, the blacks had been menacing the Native Police Barracks at the Belyando, in the absence of the troopers. On his return, they were followed by Sub-Inspector Thomas Coward and "dispersed" in the usual and approved manner.¹⁶⁶ This incident has been identified as an act of ethnic cleansing by the black armband brigade; see Wikipedia, Australian native police:

Around the same time, at the frontiers of the colony, other sections of Native Police administered many similar acts of ethnic cleansing. For instance, Sub-Inspector Thomas Coward's unit killed eight Aboriginals at Belyando,¹⁶⁷

This statement is based on the following newspaper report:

A certain N. P. officer lately boasted that in an attack of this nature he had personally shot eight darkies, but it would be improper in us to connect Mr. Coward's name with that transaction in the present state of the law. The boast, made by whom it may, is calculated to excite unpleasant sensations in the breast of humane persons, and we hope will not be repeated.¹⁶⁸

Further murders and outrages committed by the 'poor blacks' on the Lower Belyando, Cape and Burdekin were reported. The bloodthirsty deeds commenced from December 1864, when the blacks killed a hutkeeper at Conway, and roasted him over his own fire. Thence proceeding down Rosetta Creek, they rifled the newly-formed station of Messrs. Parkes and Murray; a lad, the only person on the station at the time, escaped by secreting himself in a partly-built hut. From Rosetta Creek they struck across the Belyando to the Hermitage station, (Messrs. Raymond and Featherstonehaugh) and almost as soon as they got there, they killed a shepherd named Sadleir, a lad about nineteen. The blacks after this slaughter camped that night at a large lagoon in the scrub, and the murdered lad's flock having come home without him, was 300 short. Another shepherd, named Dan Smith, well-armed, a good shot, and not afraid, took the flock out. A few hours after, this unfortunate man was found with his head smashed in, and partially consumed on a fire. But one of the blacks was shot, the rest escaping to the ranges, with the loss of their weapons, which were burned by the pursuing party. During the night, one of the gang returned and bore away the body of the dead blackfellow. Mr. Uhr, the Lieutenant of native police, and his troopers, came up in about two weeks, he having been absent at Conway, where the blacks had split up. Being met by a party of volunteers from the Hermitage; after some days, tracking, the trail of the right blacks was found, as it were, red-handed, with the clothes of the murdered men in their possession, prompt justice was dealt out to them. While after these blacks, two of Mr. Kellett's shepherds were murdered, also poor Meredith and Neely on Cornish Creek. Following close upon the above, was the slaughter of two more of Mr. Kellett's men going out with sheep. The remains of one of these poor victims was found with the face chopped off, a foot pushed through the mouth, and the

¹⁶⁵ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 8 April 1865 p 3.

¹⁶⁶ Queensland Times 17 January 1865 p 3.

¹⁶⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_native_police as at 15 October 2019.

¹⁶⁸ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 20 December 1864 p 1.

countenance drawn upon the leg, so as to resemble a mask. On neither of the runs where the above murders were committed had the blacks been molested, nor had the police visited them.

The catalogue could readily be swollen by other murders on the Burdekin; in one case a man was killed under his dray on the road to Flinders. Mr. Gibbs met his death while on the Flinders Road and about the same time the blacks stuck up Mr. Curi's station in open daylight. The Police under Lieutenant Uhr had far too large a district to protect, and, although Mr. Uhr was a most indefatigable and energetic officer, it was impossible for him to visit every part of his district more than once in three months. He had an immense field to traverse, and one comprising more scrub and harbour for blacks than any other patrol in the district. It was hoped that Commissioner Seymour would see the necessity of forming another police station on the West bank of the Belyando, or rather Sutton.¹⁶⁹

The following report from Acting Sub-Inspector Otto Oscar Paschen, dated 16 June 1865, was handed to the *Brisbane Courier* by the Commissioner of Police:

I have the honour to report that on receipt of instructions contained in a telegram bearing date the 26th May ultimo, which reached me on the 28th May, I proceeded at once to Coomooboolaroo. I found Acting Sub-Inspector Hill, having been killed by the blacks, and Trooper Fred being severely wounded and confined to bed at the Pearl Creek Station. On my way to Coomooboolaroo, via Cooroorah, I met with numerous fresh tracks of blacks, and followed them up towards Springton, where on the evening of June 2nd instant a collision took place between my detachment Native Mounted Police and a mob of blacks; they dispersed in the Forty-mile Scrub, Lower Dawson Road.

I have the honour to report that I visited the stations named in the margin—Sanders, Mackenzie, Cooroorah, Springton, Tryphinia Vale, Pearl Creek, Coomooboolaroo, Wooroona and that the following collisions took place between the Native Police under my command and the aboriginals, viz.:

June 4th On the Sanders Run, near the Expedition Range. The blacks dispersed towards the Comet Range.

June 5th On the foot of the Comet Range; the blacks dispersed.

June 7th In a scrub near the Tryphinia Vale Station; the blacks dispersed.

Sub-Inspector Blakeney and three (3) troopers arrived on the 7th June, and Sub-Inspector W P Bayley with nine (9) troopers on the 9th June instant. Early on the morning of the 10th June a collision took place in the Expedition Range between the four detachments Native Mounted Police and a party of aboriginals, when the latter were dispersed.

I have the honour to state that I consider the blacks to have left the district for a time, but they will no doubt return to the Expedition Range; and in the Lower Dawson district they are very numerous, and of a hostile disposition towards the Europeans. I consider it my duty to submit to you the urgent necessity for immediate and permanent police protection against the natives of that district.

Finally, I have the honour to state that the police will encounter great difficulties in the Lower Dawson district, while several squatters continue to admit the blacks into their stations, and harbour and protect them against the police.¹⁷⁰

Commissioner DT Seymour was asked to prepare a report on Paschen's conduct regarding the follow up actions against the Aborigines involved in murdering Acting Sub-Inspector Cecil Hill for Governor Bowen:

With regard to Sub-Inspector Paschen's report (made in June 1865) of sundry collisions between the detachment of Native Police under his command and the Aborigines of the Mackenzie District (which is, I presume, the report referred to by the Secretary of State, there being no officer in the

¹⁶⁹ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General 4 April 1865 p 3.

¹⁷⁰ Supplement to the Brisbane Courier 26 June 1865 p 1.

force named "Pescher.") I beg to state that, just previous to the date of Mr. Paschen's report, the blacks in that district had been guilty of numerous outrages, and had murdered one of the Shepherds on the Coomooboolaroo (Mr. Thomson's) run. Large numbers of Aborigines had collected and the settlers apprehended a renewal of wholesale massacres, such as that of the Wills family in 1861 on the neighbouring Cullinaringo [sic] run. Under these circumstances, urgent appeals were made to the Government for protection. Consequently, Mr. Hill, an officer of the Native Police, was despatched with a party of troopers for the purpose of endeavouring to apprehend the murderers; but he was himself surprised by the same tribe; and he and one of his troopers were murdered in their camp at night. It was in consequence of this last crime that Sub-Inspectors Paschen, Blakeney, and Beevor were sent into the district to restore order and protect the lives of the settlers. Mr. Paschen's report was addressed by him to his immediate official superior the Inspector of Police for the Northern Districts. As there was naturally great anxiety on the part of the public to ascertain what steps had been taken for the protection of the lives of their fellow colonists, I communicated to the local press a copy of Mr. Paschen's report. I have since had reason to believe that Sub-Inspector Paschen in that report very much exaggerated the number of his collisions with the aborigines. The fact is that (as is well-known to every Australian Colonist) it is very difficult to bring hostile blacks to close quarters, unless they are in overwhelming numbers. They generally on the approach of a party of the Police disperse in the almost impenetrable "scrubs" or jungles where it is next to impossible to overtake them. Consequently, the collisions in the reports of the Native Police Officers refer in a majority of cases to a few spears thrown, and a few shots fired at a distance with little or no loss of either side. Mr. Paschen was formerly in the Victorian Police. He brought very strong certificates of good conduct and ability; he is a man of about thirty years of age. With respect to the recommendations of the Select Committee of the Queensland Parliament in 1861 on the organization and management of the Native Police Force, I beg to report that these recommendations have been carried out as strictly as possible by the Queensland Government and by myself as Commissioner. Taking the recommendations of that Committee in the order in which they appear in the Report, I would remark:

1. With a view of securing the services of efficient officers, the rank of Camp Sergeant has been abolished and in lieu thereof, young gentlemen well recommended are appointed Acting Sub-Inspectors, and have to perform the duties formerly discharged by the Camp Sergeants, besides being occasionally taken on patrol by the officer in charge of the district. They have thus an opportunity of learning thoroughly their work, and from the most efficient of them, regardless of seniority, the Sub-Inspectors are selected. No Acting Sub-Inspector is, however promoted until he has been at least six months in the service. The Commissioner, two of the present Inspectors, and several of the junior officers, have held commissions in Her Majesty's army; while the senior officer of the Native Police has served in that force very nearly ten years.

2. Every effort is made to secure the best officers available. The barracks of the Native Police have been moved away from the towns and the force is being gradually pushed further into the interior of the country; a White Force, with one or two blacks attached as trackers, being substituted in the more settled districts. The Head Quarters are now fixed at Springsure, a distance of two hundred and sixty miles inland from Rockhampton, where they were in 1861.

3. In order as strictly as possible to carry out the recommendations of the Committee with regard to recruiting the troopers from districts at a distance from those in which they are likely to be employed, an officer is sent every year to obtain recruits in the South of New South Wales, fully five hundred miles from the Queensland border; while of the troopers recruited in Queensland none are ever stationed in their own or the neighbouring district. General monthly reports are furnished by the officers in command of detachments and special reports whenever anything unusual occurs.¹⁷¹

The *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* was provided with the following account of the murder of Lieutenant Cecil Hill, from the pen of his brother:

N. M. Police Barracks, Rockhampton, June 13, 1865. I gained the following particulars of my brother's death personally from the superintendent of Pearl Creek Station (Mr. Rothery), who was with my brother and his troopers at the time of the occurrence — having ridden up there myself to

¹⁷¹ Bowen to Carnarvon, Despatch 61, 12 November 1866, (Sub-enclosure in Enclosure 3). [QSA GOV/24].

see him upon the subject. As nearly as possible, I use Mr. Rothery's own words: Lieut. Cecil Hill and three troopers rode up to my station (Pearl Creek) on the evening of Monday, 21st May. Lieut. Hill informed me that he had come down from the Mackenzie, having heard a report that a shepherd on my run had been murdered by the blacks. I told him that an old shepherd had been murdered about eight weeks previously, and till now no police had been down. Mr. Hill and his troopers camped at my station that night. The next morning (Monday, the 22nd), Mr. Hill asked me if I had much to do; I said, No. He then asked me, as he did not know the run, to show him where the blacks were camped. I said I would, and we all left the station together — Lieut. Hill, myself, and three troopers. We called at Mr. Thompson's station (Coomooboolaroo), and stayed there to lunch. Mr. Thompson wished Mr. Hill to stop there, but he would not, wanting to push on. A little before sunset we came upon the camp, which Lieutenant Hill and his troopers charged and dispersed; one, I think, was shot. The gins were left in the camp; I counted them afterwards at Mr. Hill's request, and there were eighty-nine. We then camped for the night. I wished to camp at a hut a mile off, but Mr. Hill told me that I need not be afraid of the blacks returning, as they would not come near 'his boys.' The gins were camped some distance from us: the troopers went to sleep. This I remarked to Mr. Hill, but he said that they were tired and wanted rest. Mr. Hill and myself did not sleep. The night was pitch dark. About 3 o'clock the next morning (Tuesday, the 23rd), the blacks came upon us: they were on us before one in the camp was aware of it. Mr. Hill was the first to jump on his feet, with his revolver in his hand. He staggered a few paces, and then fell flat on his face. I was struck on the wrist and on the chest by nullah nullahs. I fired my revolver, and shot one black; the rest then rapidly dispersed. I then looked about for Lieut. Hill; I found him lying on his face; his head and face all covered with blood; there was also a spear wound in his back, under the left shoulder; I shook him by the shoulder and spoke to him; he did not answer, but moaned once or twice, and then ceased to breathe. I found one of the troopers (Fred) had been terribly cut about. Immediately it was light enough I dispatched one of the troopers (the only one that was but slightly wounded) into Mr. Thompson's to communicate the news; we then covered the body as well as we could with blankets, and made for Mr. Thompson's station, with the horses and the two wounded troopers. Mr. Thompson at once sent on a spring cart, with assistance to bring in the body, and rode off himself to Rockhampton, which he reached that same evening, a distance of 80 miles. On returning to look for the body, it was found that the blacks had returned and stripped the body of every article of clothing, and taken all away; the corpse was then brought in to the station, and buried the next day, Wednesday, the 24 May; the wounded trooper, Fred, I took to my own station.—Stanley Grantham Hill.¹⁷²

The Maryborough Assizes opened on 14 September 1865 when his Honour Justice Lutwyche took his seat on the bench. Jackey, an aboriginal, was indicted for that he, on 13 March, 1865, at Degilbo, in the colony of Queensland, did feloniously, wilfully, and of malice aforethought, kill one Ann Mee. Mr. C. W. Blakeney appointed by the Crown, watched the case for the prisoner. The Crown Prosecutor opened the case and then called.

Henry Mee who, being sworn, said: I was shepherd at Degilbo in March last, with my wife in the hut on the station; the hut is two miles from the head station; on the 15th of March I left the hut between 7.30 and 8; my wife was at the hut then, and was quite well; I returned at 6 o'clock that evening, and found my wife lying on the floor covered with blood; I saw a large wound under her chin; she was very weak from loss of blood; I shouted for another man to come and help me; we lifted her on the bed; the man's name was George Wallup; I gave her some tea which she drank, and she seemed to revive a little; I then sent to the head station; Mr. Nott came and brought some wine with him; I found another wound on her left side, as if stabbed with a knife; this wound was between the ribs; I did not discover any other wound at that time; Dr. Tymons came next morning; my wife died on Monday, 20th of March: I missed from the hut, on the 13th, fifteen half crowns, a two-shilling piece, one half-sovereign, one pound note, and a gold ring; it was a small gold ring marked 22; they had all been in a little work-box on a table; there was a purse in the box that was gone also; the box was locked when I left the hut; when I returned the box was broken open; I would know some of the things again; there were four half-crowns marked and scratched. [Thomas Clohesy was

¹⁷² Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 17 June 1865 p 2.

Queensland Native Police

here called and sworn, to produce a purse and contents received from Mr. Single, and knife received from Dr Tymons. The witness Mee identified the purse, the four half-crowns, and the knife.] Examination continued: I saw prisoner for the first time on Wednesday, 15th March; he was brought into my hut; my wife also saw him; she said, 'That is him,' two or three times; I did not observe whether there was any blood on the knife; I found it when I came home under the table; my wife was on very good terms with all the people about the station, both blacks and whites. The Crown Prosecutor put in Mrs Mee's dying declaration as evidence. The document was then read, in which the dying woman without hesitation declared that the prisoner had attempted to outrage her person, and afterwards inflicted the wounds upon her of which she subsequently died. The jury retired to consider their verdict, and after a half hour's absence, returned with a verdict of Guilty.¹⁷³ On 15 September 1865 at the Maryborough Assizes, Jackey was sentenced to death. At 8 am on 3 November 1865 in the precincts of the Brisbane goal Jackey, an ex-trooper, was hanged and his last words were to the effect that he was sorry for what he had done, and that he hoped God would forgive him.¹⁷⁴

Distribution of the Native Police on 31 December 1865¹⁷⁵

Location	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Sergeant	Troopers
Albert River		1 acting		7
Belyando River		1	1	10
Bowen	1	1 acting		7
Burdekin River		1 + 1 acting		4
Claverton Downs		1		5
Curriwillinghami				1
Dawson River		1 + 1 acting		5
Isaac River		1 + 1 acting		8
Lynd River & Cardwell	1	2 + 1 acting		11
Mackenzie River		1 + 1 Acting		8
Maranoa River	1	1	1	23
Maryborough		2		2
Rockhampton & Nebo	2	2 acting	1	7
St George				3
Springsure		2 + 1 acting		10
Suttor River		1 acting		4
Waverly		1 + 1 acting		3
Yo Yo Creek			1	6
Humpie Bong			1	
Unattached	2	2 acting	1	2
Totals	7	14 + 14 acting	6	126

¹⁷³ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 16 September 1865 p 2.

¹⁷⁴ Brisbane Courier 4 November 1865 p 5.

¹⁷⁵ 15 February 1866, the Commissioner of Police second annual report.

1866

On 6 January 1866, the Governor proclaimed the Pastoral Districts of Cook, Burke and Warrego, as unsettled lands of the Colony, and open to occupation by License or Lease. Crown Land offices were opened on 1 May 1866 for Cook and Burke; for the former, the Acting Commissioner would be located at the second crossing of the Burdekin, and in the latter at Burketown, on the Albert River. Mr. Landsborough, who had been appointed Police Magistrate and Commissioner of Crown Lands for the district of Burke, started with a survey party; and Mr. Walker, formerly Commandant of the Native Police, left Brisbane, with an officer from the Electric Telegraph department, to explore the country between Cardwell and Burketown, and to determine on the best route for carrying the wires.

Mr. William Stephens, travelling botanist, started from Mooloolah, a small timber port to the northward of Bribie Island, on the morning of 23 February 1866, for Brisbane, and was accompanied by a blackfellow, named Tommy Skyring, whom he employed to show him the way. Mooloolah is 115 miles from Brisbane. The deceased was last seen alive at the waterhole, on Meridan Plains, where his dead body was afterwards found. Robert Keely saw him camped there at 3 pm, and Tommy Skyring was with him. He was baking a damper at the time. He told Keely he intended to stop for the night at a hut nine miles further on. Captain Piper and Johnnie Griffin, two aboriginals, left Mooloolah soon after Stephens, and brought word to Keely at Kinman's Plains, at 8 pm the same day of Stephens' death. Stephens' body was buried on Saturday afternoon. The injuries were several marks of a tomahawk upon the body; the vertebrae of the neck were cut through, the cheek bone was broken, and there were traces of blows on the jaw and throat. His hat was found some thirty yards from the waterhole, and his braces in the waterhole. The bag in which he carried his botanical specimens was also recovered. There was a flannel shirt on his body; the rest of his clothes were missing. The three blackfellows, named above, were all well known. Skyring had been twelve months in the employment of Mr. James Lowe, timber merchant, at Mooloolah, and spoke English well. Griffin was one of nine aboriginals who were formerly in the Native Police, and had been recently roving about the district. Captain Piper was, a short time ago, discharged from Brisbane Gaol, where he had been undergoing sentence for stealing a cash-box. The Coroner had ordered a warrant be issued for the apprehension of the three blacks named, on suspicion of their having committed the murder and a detachment of Native Police had left Maryborough for Mooloolah. Captain Piper and Tommy Skyring were arrested at Mooloolah and were on their way to Brisbane. Captain Piper escaped from the custody of the police. He was on board the steamer Gneering, in charge of the police, when Piper managed to slip his handcuffs, and jump overboard. He swam ashore, and succeeded in effecting his escape. Tommy Skyring was remanded into custody for seven days. Skyring died in custody on or about 20 April 1866.¹⁷⁶

The Colonial Secretary's Office, on 2 March 1866 published Rules (regulations) for the general government and discipline of the Native Mounted Police Force.¹⁷⁷

The blacks killed two shepherds on Cotherstone (Mr. Thorne's) run, and took away a lot of sheep. They also killed a shepherd at Cheeseborough (formerly part of Wolfgang run), and took a lot of sheep from there. They stripped one of Mr. Walker's men and the poor fellow at Cheeseborough, after killing them. Mr. Coward came over to the Clermont district from the Belyando River NP camp as soon as he got the information, and got into the blacks' camp on 28 March 1866, but could not do very much; it being in such a dense scrub. Mr. Walker was out with the police from 31 March 1866 till 2 April 1866, but up to that time the troopers had not got on

¹⁷⁶ Brisbane Courier 9 March 1866 p 2; 31 March 1866 p 5; 3 April 1866 p 2 & 21 April 1866 p 5.

¹⁷⁷ Gazette Vol. VII. 10 March 1866 [No. 28.] p 257. The rules are set out at Appendix B.

the blacks' tracks; however, there was a good party in pursuit. Mr. CJ Blakeney was also sent for when the blacks began to be troublesome, but he took no notice of the letter.¹⁷⁸

Mr. Edward Gaden was charged with the wilful murder of an aboriginal named Peter, at Peak Downs station, on 27 February 1866. The following evidence was given at the Clermont Police court on 3 April 1866 as follows:

Mr. Edward Gaden and his brother Robert were travelling with stock towards the Gulf, and had occasion to pass the Peak Downs Station, of which Mr. Burnett was manager. The Messrs. Gaden had with them two black men, one called Peter and a gin, who had travelled with them for some distance, until, arriving among the blacks on Peak Downs Station, the men, deserted their employers, leaving the gin behind. This gin was retained as a hostage, and, for safe custody, was placed on a dray, with a bullock-chain round one of her legs. The gin jumped from the dray and was dragged some little distance before the bullocks could be stopped. The blackfellow, Peter, at this moment, came running up armed with paddy melon sticks and a tomahawk. Edward Gaden drew his revolver and fired the shot which caused Peter's death: it was added that the other blacks exhibited hostile intentions.

According to Mr. Burnett's evidence however, Mr. E Gaden drew his revolver as soon as he saw a black running towards the dray, and when Peter put his hand on his arm, and said "baal," to prevent him from shooting, he immediately fired the shot. This witness also stated that it was another black, and not Peter that had the tomahawk and sticks. E Gaden was committed on a charge of murder and bail was refused. He was brought in handcuffs from Clermont as a prisoner to Rockhampton, where he must lie in gaol until the Assizes at the end of September 1866.¹⁷⁹

Mr. Oscar de Satge, of Wolfgang Downs, 12 April 1866, wrote as follows to the *Peak Downs Telegram* of 21 April 1866:

As our firm have been the chief sufferers, from the late depredations of the blacks in this district (Clermont) — having lost 270 sheep besides the shepherd at Cheeseborough— and having noticed in one of your issues of March (1866), that you attribute these murders to the fact of Mr. Gaden having shot one of the Peak Downs blacks, I wish (on behalf of our firm) most emphatically to deny that Mr. Gaden's proceedings, could in any way have caused the Cheeseborough murder and the loss of sheep. ... my utter disgust that, whilst Mr. Gaden, who acted strongly certainly, but still justly, should have been dragged down 150 miles in custody, and committed for trial. ... I most emphatically assert that those who let in the blacks at Huntley and Peak Downs stations can be charged with the murders of the Cotherstone and Cheeseborough shepherds and consequent loss of property. Mr. Gaden, as I take it, would have been perfectly justified to call for the protection of the native police when he first saw the blacks at Peak Downs station, or to summon assistance from neighbouring stations to disperse a gathering that meant sure and certain mischief. The whole district has learnt a lesson, that for years to come we cannot trust blacks, and that if admitted before then, it must be at a cost of many lives, either single shepherds or a wholesale massacre like Frazer's or Wills' lives remorselessly and savagely taken by wretches who are guided by no instinct but that of plunder and blood-thirstiness, and who are too low in the scale of humanity to find supporters in any but the few sham philanthropists who whine for the "poor blacks," ignorant equally of the subjects and their habits.¹⁸⁰

On 25 September 1866 at the Rockhampton Assizes before His Honour the Chief Justice, Edward Ainsworth Gaden was charged for that he, on 27 February 1866, at the Peak Downs, did feloniously kill and murder one Peter, an aboriginal. A great deal of evidence was called regarding Gaden's actions towards Peter. However, the Attorney-General for the prosecution, was required by law to prove the death of Peter, which is normally done by a registered medical practitioner. In

¹⁷⁸ Brisbane Courier 5 April 1866 p 4. See also p 73 below.

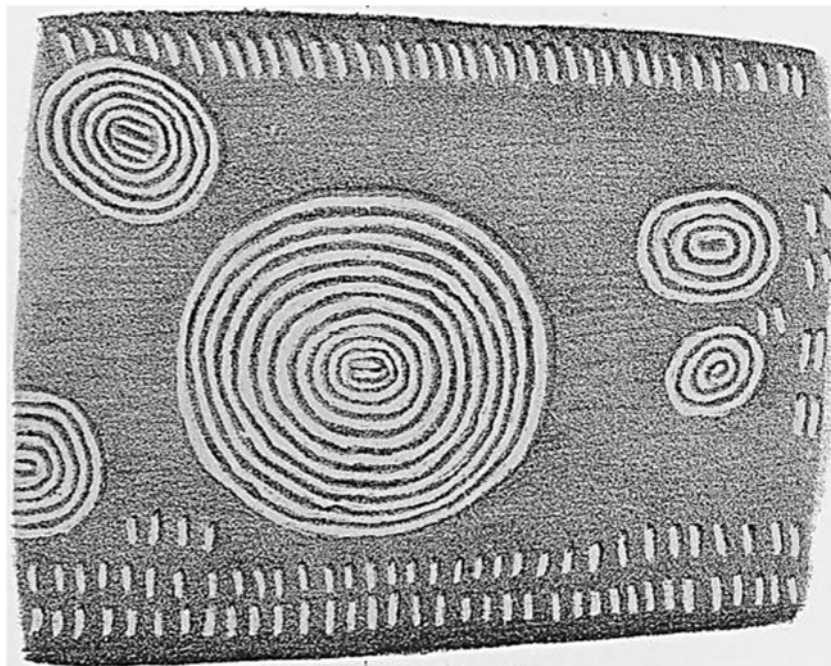
¹⁷⁹ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 24 April 1866 p 2.

¹⁸⁰ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 28 April 1866 p 3.

this case, he relied on the evidence of James Brown an employee of the Peak Downs station who in giving his evidence before the court said:

at that moment I heard a shot, and, on looking round, I saw the prisoner's hand with a revolver in it pointed towards Peter; prisoner was then on horseback; I then heard prisoner's brother call out "What are you doing, Edward?" I saw Peter fall; he was taken by the other blacks down to the store; I went down to him, and saw a wound under the left breast; his jacket was scorched over the spot; the blacks afterwards carried him towards a waterhole; I afterwards saw him stripped lying on a tarpaulin; it was saturated with blood, and he was in a dying condition; I saw the wound; I never saw him dead.

The Attorney-General here called His Honour's attention to the deposition of the witness, James Brown, in which Brown stated that "the black boy died the next day." The witness said he said so, but meant that he had heard he died next day; from what he saw of him he must have died. The Attorney-General here said that the Crown Solicitor had been misled by James Brown. Brown had said that very morning that he had seen Peter dead. There was a failure of proof, and he could not carry the case any further. Mr. Pring for the defence was about to address the jury, when His Honour said it was unnecessary, as the corpus delicti had not been proved. In the absence of proof of death, the jury would return a verdict of not guilty. Verdict, not guilty. Edward Gaden was then immediately discharged.¹⁸¹



¹⁸¹ Brisbane Courier 2 October 1866 p 2.

The Case of Charles John Blakeney

Charles John Blakeney, a Sub-Inspector of Native Police came under official scrutiny because of his unsatisfactory conduct. On 30 April 1866, Commissioner Seymour wrote to Inspector George Murray directing him to interview Blakeney as to why he remained in barracks, as shown by his duty sheet, during the months of February and March and the several complaints made during that time, by residents in his district, of the outrages committed by the blacks. This matter dragged on until 28 November 1866 when the Governor in Council, based on the recommendation of a commission of inquiry into Blakeney's conduct, dismissed Blakeney from the Native Police. Inspector GPM Murray preferred six charges against Blakeney; the first two are perhaps, of greater relevance to these proceedings:

First Charge. That Sub-Inspector Blakeney did not patrol the lower part of his (the Isaac) district either this year or the end of last year, 1865, during which time he has been repeatedly called by the squatters, more especially on the two following occasions, viz.: first, when the two men were murdered by the blacks on Cotherstone Run, in the first week in March, 1866; second, when one man was murdered on May Downs on or about the 2nd June, 1866.

Second Charge. That Sub-Inspector Blakeney was in barracks the whole of the month of January, 1866. In the month of February, he did only sixteen days duty with two troopers. In the month of March, he was in barracks the whole time, although he admitted in a telegram of 26th March that the detachment of native police were required on several stations. For the latter month he sent in a farrier's account for £5.

The commission of inquiry dated 5 November 1866, which consisted of John Jardine, J.P. and John Marlow, found "that Sub-Inspector Blakeney is not fitted to hold an appointment under the Queensland Government as a Native Mounted Police officer, and we beg to recommend his dismissal from the Native Mounted Police Force."

Arising out of the investigation of Blakeney for malingering, a number of interesting Native Police operational reports were made available to the commission of inquiry such as the North Midland District, General Monthly Reports covering the period 1 January 1866 to 30 June 1866. This report appears to be a requirement of regulation 51 of the Native Police regulations promulgated in the gazette of 2 March 1866, "In the monthly return of duties performed, the number of men on duty each day, the place visited, the number of miles travelled, as well as the nature of the duty on which employed, whose order, and any occurrence of an extraordinary nature, are to be entered".

The First Twenty Years

Native Police Monthly Report for May 1866

Police Station	Miles from HQ	Establishment	Monthly Activities
Rockhampton		2 OFC, 1 Sgt, 15 Tprs, 25 Horses	
Insp G Murray A Sub-Insp Compigne Sergeant Mahon			General duties, 1st Bush; 2nd Torilla; 3rd Bush collision; 4th Torilla; 5th Bankia; 6th, 7th Tilpal; 8th Raspberry Creek; 9th Bush; 10th Raspberry Creek; 11th Canal Creek; 12th, 13th Rockhampton; 14th, 15th, 16th, Bush; 17th Glenroy; 18th Bush; 19th Rosewood; 20th Bush collision; 21st, 22nd Glenroy; 23rd Morinish; 24th Canoona, collision; 25th Canoona; 26th, 27th Canal Creek; 28th Cannons; 29th Limestone; 30th, 31st Barracks. Camp duty whole month
Broad Sound	96	2 OFC, 5 Tprs, 7 horses	
A Sub-Insp Carr A Sub-Insp Seymour			1st to 10th Barracks; 11th, 12th, 13th Hoodleigh; 14th Barracks; 15th Marlborough; 16th to 20th Barracks; 21st Apis Creek; 22nd Leura; 23rd Balcomba; 24th Bush; 25th Balcomba; 26th Apis Creek; 27th, 28th Barracks; 29th Marlborough; 30th, 31st, Canoona Inn. 1st Glenprairie; 2nd Mount O'Connell; 3rd Bush; 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th Tilpal; 8th Raspberry Creek; 9th Bush; 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th Baker's Peninsula; 14th Tilpal; 15th Glenprairie; 16th to 31st, Barracks; Collision on 12th.
Mackenzie	180	2 OFC, 5 Tprs, 14 Horses	
Sub-Insp Paschen A Sub-Insp Stokes			1st to 8th Barracks; 9th Phillips' Lagoon; 10th Joss; 11th Apis Creek; 12th to 14th Leura; 15th Bush; 16th, 17th Balcomba; 18th Leura; 19th Apis Creek; 20th Calumbra; 21st to 31 barracks. General duty all the month.
Isaac	280	2 OFC, 7 Tprs, 19 Horses	
Sub-Insp Blakeney A Sub-Insp Nantes			1st, 2nd, 3rd Barracks; 4th Nebo; 5th to 12th Barracks; 13th Fort Cooper; 14th to 20th Barracks; 21st Retreat; 22nd Bush; 23rd Bush collision; 24th Bush; 25th Hazlewood; 26th, 27th Lansdown; 28th McKay; 29th Greenmount; 30th Hamilton; 31st Bush. 1st to 9th Barracks; 9th Oxford Downs; 10th Salt Bush; 11th, 12th Bush; 13th Salt Bush; 14th Cardown; 15th Collaroy; 16th Bush collision; 17th Collaroy; 18th, 19th Bush; 20th to 31st Barracks.
Upper Dawson	190	2 OFC, 3 Tprs, 11 Horses	
Sub-Insp Freudenthal A Sub-Insp Aubin			1st to 27th Barracks; 28th Costillo's; 29th Helmtree Creek; 30th Taroom; 31st Rochdale. 1st to 11th Barracks; 12th Taroom; 13th Gwambegwyne; 14th to 29th Barracks; 30th, 31st Bush.

The above table gives a quick and ready digestible description of the activities of the Native Police in the northern districts which would now be more appropriately described as central Queensland. The patrol area was from Rockhampton, south to Taroom, west to Duaringa and north to Apis Creek; all done on horseback with no communication facilities other than the local postal service. When raw data is made available to third parties, often attempts are made to mould

the material in a way that it was never intended for, sometimes called reading against the grain. Regulation 51, quoted above, clearly shows it was a managerial tool to ensure that officers did their duty of patrolling their allotted area. Take the case of Mr Walsh, the then member for Maryborough, a rabid critic of the Native Police. On 25 April 1866, he moved that a return be furnished to the House of "the number and cause of collisions since 15 January 1865, number of blacks captured, wounded or shot and the number of murders and other outrages committed by the blacks in the same period". The House duly passed the motion. On 10 October 1867, Walsh raised the matter again, accusing the government of failing to provide the information. The Colonial Secretary replied, "that those returns could not be furnished, because all the reports sent in by officers of the native police were merely, that the blacks had been "dispersed." They (the returns) were not refused in any way; but it was merely impossible to give them in the shape wanted." From the record, it is clear that the Colonial Secretary was telling the truth no matter how much the then Exeter Hall mob (social do-gooders) demanded the information and accused the government of a cover-up. There is however, something inherently rational about Walsh's request for information of the type he sought, even more so today. Yet the information cannot be found. The Aborigines, on the one hand, have never kept records, had no information service that might have published casualty lists or policy statements of intent and purpose regarding the settlement of their lands. On the other hand, the colonial governments were the offspring of the British parliament and derived their sovereignty and political legitimacy from that parliament. This concept, held by the colonial government and its constituents, the citizens of Queensland, was unshakable and set rigid in the foundations of Queensland. The frame of reference of the Queensland government of the day was that settlement in the unsettled lands of the Colony or the waste lands would be permitted and a protective force of native police would be employed as peace officers to keep the peace and quieten any troublesome natives. The presumption of the government was peaceful settlement with the inclusion of the native occupants of the lands into the colony's economy. The trouble lay in the fact that neither side understood each other.

The recurring motif of Australian settlement is the entry into a run by the squatter with his sheep and shepherds, the erection of huts and hurdles and then the depasturing of the flock. Perchance, from over the hill and down the dale, come the Aborigines, with all the irrationality that nature possesses. The shepherd is hacked to death and often eaten, the hut ransacked, the sheep stolen and a sorry trail of bloodied and dumped litter is strewn along the vale of tears to the scrubs of despair.

Down came the officer a riding on his thoroughbred
Down came troopers, one two three
Where is the jumbuck you've got in the tuckerbag
You'll come a waltzing Matilda with me

The Native Police of Queensland were a unique instrument of Queensland law enforcement. Aborigines had been disrupting the settlement of the colony; no reason was ever advanced by the Aborigines at the time for their activity.¹⁸² After many inquiries, it was found that the way to control this disruption was to employ Aborigines provided they were not related to the disrupting parties, under the control and direction of a solitary white man. The qualifications for the job of trooper were to be a full blood, initiated adult male with no tribal or filial ties of any kind with the disrupting group. Since the enforcement was carried out by the aboriginal troopers who were uneducated, it was impossible to ask that they complete clerical returns of enforcement activities. Therefore, Mr

¹⁸² Social or civil agitation begins with a grievance coupled with a goal, supported by unity of purpose and rounded off with a rallying cry. Henry Reynolds has picked over the skeleton of Australian colonial history with the rapacity of a pariah dog and to date has come forward with no bona fide homegrown aboriginal resistance force. Nevertheless, apologists for Aborigines, post Whitlam, have advanced many and varied theories.

The First Twenty Years

Walsh sought information that was consistent with a Eurocentric view of society but to the Aborigines it was meaningless, “dat fellow mob, him bin cranky. Me say, stop in kueens name. Him no more.”

The six months sample of reports provided, however, does allow the reader to identify the contacts patrols made with Aborigines by the Native Police on their monthly tours. Set out below is a table identifying those contacts for the six months 1 January to 30 June 1866. The reader may observe that in this sample officer Compigne seems to be over zealous compared to his brother officers. The reason might lay in the statement of Mr Edward H Baker of Peninsular station, “... of Mr. Compigne you will find that I always kept a number of fresh steady horses on hand to remount every man in the patrol whenever they came, and otherwise give him all the help in my power.”¹⁸³

Contacts between Native Police and Aborigines

Police Station	Officer	Date 1866	Particulars
Upper Dawson	Beavor	Early Jan	Pursuit of bushranger, possibly Macpherson
Upper Dawson	Aubin	1 – 6 Jan	Pursuit of bushranger, possibly Macpherson
Broadsound	Paschen	Early Jan	Pursuit of bushranger, possibly Macpherson
Upper Dawson	Beavor	February	Pursuit of bushranger, possibly Macpherson
Upper Dawson	Aubin	February	Pursuit of bushranger, possibly Macpherson
Broad Sound	Paschen	8 February	Troopers deserted
Rockhampton	Compigne	11 March	At Torilla collision
Rockhampton	Compigne	15 March	At Bush collision
Rockhampton	Compigne	24 March	At Torilla collision
Rockhampton	Compigne	6 April	At Gainsford dispersed blacks for murder
Rockhampton	Compigne	7 April	At Knebworth dispersed same blacks
Rockhampton	Compigne	11 April	Bush dispersed same blacks again
Rockhampton	Compigne	30 April	Torilla Plains dispersed spearing cattle
Broadsound	Carr	6 April	Glenprairie collision blacks spearing cattle
Broadsound	Carr	18 April	Bush collision blacks spearing cattle
Mackenzie	Paschen	19 April	Pearl Creek dispersed blacks for murder, shepherd
Mackenzie	Paschen	22 April	Expedition Range dispersed same blacks
Isaac River	Nantes	10 April	Barracks dispersed hostile blacks
Rockhampton	Compigne	3 May	Bush collision
Rockhampton	Compigne	20 May	Bush collision
Rockhampton	Compigne	24 May	Canoona collision
Broadsound	Seymour	12 May	Baker's Peninsula collision
Isaac	Blakeney	23 May	Bush collision
Isaac	Nantes	16 May	Bush collision
Rockhampton	Compigne	3 June	Bush collision
Broadsound	Carr	28 June	Bush collision
Mackenzie	Paschen	4 June	May Downs collision
Mackenzie	Paschen	8 June	Redcliffe Run collision
Isaac	Nantes	20 June	Salt Bush Peak collision
Isaac	Nantes	29 June	Bush dispersed blacks

As I said above, the information sought by Walsh in 1866 regarding causality rates generated by the enforcement activities of the Native Police has remained topical ever since the black armband school of thought has come to dominated Australian colonial historiography. Henry Reynolds is credited with putting forward the modern mortality rates for Aborigines killed on the frontier by settlers and he reckoned it to be 20,000 killed. Not a shred of archival or forensic evidence has

¹⁸³ See p 94 below.

ever been put forward by Reynolds other than, “In my book *The Other Side of the Frontier*, first published 1981, I argued that it was ‘reasonable to suppose that at least 20 000 Aborigines were killed as a direct result of conflict with the settlers’.”¹⁸⁴ Of course, the more sceptical among you might mumble Mark Twain: “There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.” Then, the more erudite might recall the scholars of Constantinople, who became so distracted with the rhetoric of how many angels could dance on the head of a pin, that they allowed the Turks to capture the city. The black armband scholars are not much better and are driven to provide not so much as an answer but a figure that will shock and awe the disbelievers into silence. It seems the figure is 41,040 Aborigines killed by the Queensland Native Police based on a formula of mathematical mumbo jumbo of the highest quality.¹⁸⁵

The stereotypical view of the Native Police is that they operated regular armed patrols from their camp or station by horseback to surveil an area, then returned to camp to rest and then patrolled another area.¹⁸⁶

Regulation 17. The object in sending out patrol parties is principally that the hostile blacks, from the frequent visits of the police, may be deterred from murder and felony – this is the meaning of a preventive force.¹⁸⁷

Because this view is so entrenched in the historiography of the Black Armband Brigade, they have generalised this activity and reduced it to a mathematical formula to calculate the killing rate of Aborigines by Native Police. The rule of thumb (developed by guesswork) is to speculate that Aborigines were killed on each patrol by Native Police, then to assign a range of possible kills per patrol, say between 5 and 10 killed. Thus assume an arithmetic mean of say 10 Aborigines killed per patrol, then by the number of patrols per year for the said camp, then by the total number of camps, gives you a yearly body count, say, as follows: 10 by 21 patrols per year by 30 camps equals 6,300 killed per annum.¹⁸⁸ The assumption that Native Police spent their waking-life chasing myall blacks to kill is nonsense. They were no different to any other police force who from time to time were directed by government to carry out humanitarian activities like search and rescue and other social services. Moreover, the sole or dominate purpose or function of the Native Police was not the eradication of Aborigines by shooting but the protection of settlers’ pastoral runs from depredations by Aborigines.

The above table might be examined from different angles; the first two months of 1866 appear to be taken up with the Native Police in pursuit of Macpherson, a white man, known as the *Wild Scotchman*, who was charged with Robbery under Arms of several of her Majesty's Mails in Queensland.¹⁸⁹ This activity clearly shows that the Native Police did not spend all their time chasing after myall blacks but were also used in general policing duties when appropriate. In the above sample, it appears that on 21 days over a period of six months, contact was made with blacks by one or more of the 6 operational officers. That is to say each officer of the Midland Division was wandering the bush for 181 days seeking out blacks, which amounts to a total of 1086 days (181 x

¹⁸⁴ Reynolds, *Forgotten War* p 123.

¹⁸⁵ Raymond Evans and Robert Ørsted-Jensen, “*I cannot say the numbers that were killed*”: *Assessing Violent Mortality on the Queensland Frontier*.

¹⁸⁶ Hill, WRO, Forty-five years' experiences in north Queensland, 1861 to 1905: with a few incidents in England 1844 to 1861, Pole & Co Brisbane, 1907, p 24.

¹⁸⁷ Government Gazette of 2 March 1866, see Appendix B attached hereto.

¹⁸⁸ 10 deaths is an assumed mean of all patrols. The reader needs to understand there are no official documents on which to base these assumptions nor indeed the figures. The figures are guesstimates, an estimate calculated mainly or only by guesswork. The figures and calculations used in this sample are illustrative, used for indicative purposes and commentary only. They are not to be relied on. They are illustrative of the method of Robert Ørsted-Jensen et al.

¹⁸⁹ £250 Reward, Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 10 January 1866 p 3.

6) in the bush for a contact rate of 2% per six months. What inferences might be drawn from this conclusion? One, that the Native Police were inefficient; two, the frontier blacks were not that troublesome; three, that there were very few wild blacks about and difficult to catch; or four, that a contact rate of 2% across the entire Native Police force had a significant impact on the Aborigines? We will never know. I believe the paradigm I put forward in my Introduction above, of initial collisions by aggressive tribal males leading to their death, and then a general disintegration of the clan group by disease and white foodstuffs and then a complete withdrawal by the remnant, is the more plausible explanation for the decline in the population of full blood Aborigines.¹⁹⁰

In the beginning of this book, I raised the issue of what status was to be accorded the Aborigines who enlisted in the Native Police and effectively carried out the putting to death of many myall blacks on the frontier. The peddlers of these exaggerated causality figures need to keep firmly before their prefrontal cortex that the killing of troublesome myall blacks, frontiers blacks were done by other Aborigines. The idea that some dopey white man led a cavalry charge is absurd. It was only through the cunning and stealth of black troopers that they ever got within cooee of the myall blacks and could thus move them on or respond in kind to any physical resistance by the blacks.¹⁹¹

On 16 June 1866, a correspondent furnished the following information respecting the blacks. In addition to the twenty-five head of Mr. Seaward's cattle killed by the blacks recently, a very large number of cattle were killed on Dangar and Bode's Strathdon and Goorganga stations in the Bowen district, Emmerson's stations at Eagle Vale and Proserpine, McCartney and Dempster's Bloomsbury station, and also on Messrs. McCartney and Graham's stations at St. Helen's and Jolimont. As a result, applications for the Native Police poured in fast and furious. Mr. Inspector Marlow despatched Mr. Acting Sub-Inspector Isley and six troopers to the scene of the depredations. From Strathdon, where they dispersed two mobs of blacks, Mr. Isley proceeded through Proserpine and Crystal Brook to Goorganga, where the police dispersed two other mobs; again, onto Bloomsbury and St. Helen's, where they dispersed several very large mobs of blacks. The blacks had made a furious onslaught on the stations at Crystal Brook, Proserpine and Eagle Vale, killing a great many cattle. On his way back, Mr. Isley patrolled these runs as well, and drove the blacks, who were in large numbers, over the ranges. The police reported having seen the tails of from two to five head of cattle in every camp, so that the number of cattle killed must have been something considerable. Mr. Isley and the men under his command were spoken of as zealous and indefatigable, and if they had been better mounted would have accomplished their errand more effectually and more expeditiously. All the stations they patrolled were reported quiet.¹⁹² Notwithstanding this excellent work, the blacks returned to Mr Bode's huts at Goorganga in late November 1866 and broke into and stole 200 lbs. of flour, arms, ammunition, and all they could lay their hands on.¹⁹³

Messrs. William and Henry Clark, sons of Mr. Clark, of Cleveland, were on their way out to look for country, but it being lambing and shearing time, were camped on the Belyando River, 160 miles from Port Mackay. Mr. H. Clark and a younger brother took a mob of ewes and lambs down the river, four miles from the main camp, in consequence of the scarcity of grass. Another flock was to go down as soon as the yards were made. They arrived there on 27 September 1866. There

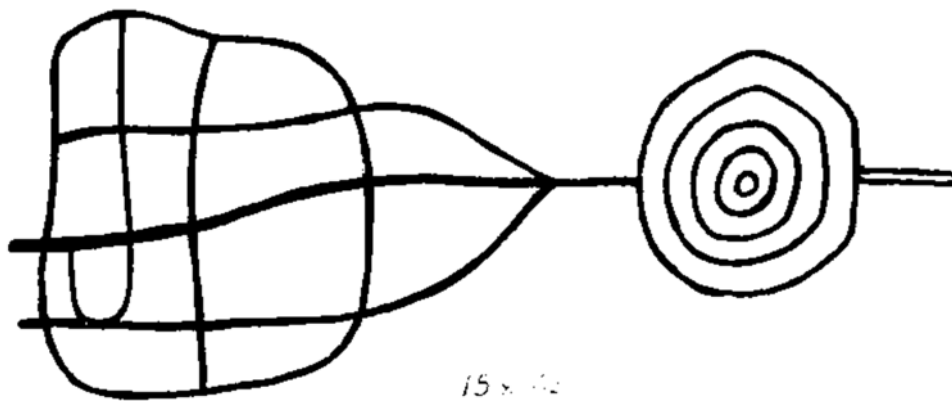
¹⁹⁰ One of the assumptions of the Black Armband Brigade is that the full blood myall of yesteryear and the mestizo remnant of day are one and the same, ignoring the cross genetic vigour of today.

¹⁹¹ 76. ... They fear the Native Police more on account of the cunning which they possess in common with themselves. J.L. Zillman, 1861 Qld Select Committee p 78.

¹⁹² Northern Argus 27 June 1866 p 3.

¹⁹³ The Queenslander 8 December 1866 p 8.

being another man with a flock of ewes and lambs a mile and a-half off. Mr. Henry Clark intended taking some provisions to him on the following morning, 28 September. At about 10 or 11 o'clock he took his bridle and went to catch his horse, which had evidently been feeding on the edge of a scrub, for the bridle was found there, with blood on it. The blacks must have speared Mr. Clark through the leg. After that, he ran to the camp for his gun, where he was met by other blacks, and speared above the heart. They then, after cutting him with a tomahawk, laid him alongside a log in the camp, and covered him completely over, so that the brother who was out with the sheep might not see him on his return, and so be off his guard. They meant to kill him too, there was no doubt, but he had kept to open ground all day and carried his revolver. Besides, in the middle of the day, Mr. Earl, in looking for horses, came up to the brother at the time the blacks were believed to be lying in wait for him, which saved him. In the evening, when he brought his sheep in, he saw the boots of his murdered brother, but could not find him. He ran directly over to the man a mile and a half off, and found that he had not been there. They did not succeed in finding him until the next morning, when they found him in the position above described. Mr. Earl took a horse and dray, brought the corpse to his place, and buried him. Information was at once conveyed to the police at Mount McDonnell, eighty-three miles distant, who proceeded on the tracks of the murderers, and after some days' pursuit overtook, and succeeded in shooting eight or ten of the blacks.¹⁹⁴



¹⁹⁴ Brisbane Courier 3 November 1866 p 5.

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began with the Editor of the *Toowoomba Chronicle and Queensland Advertiser* in a very reflective mood on collisions between Aborigines and pastoralists:

The continued depredations and scenes of indiscriminate slaughter and plunder that of late have reached us through the press and from the northern stations in particular, deserve the serious consideration of the public and especially of the Government. Queensland is more open to such serious crime than any other of the Australian colonies, because her pursuits are chiefly pastoral, and stretch over an area more sparsely populated than any other. It is no doubt a grave question to consider whether the more wide-spread efforts of our missionaries should be encouraged by the Government to reclaim the heathens of the bush, or whether greater police protection should be given to check their raids and inroads upon the white settlers. Moralists, and especially of the Exeter Hall school, and others at a distance, will no doubt argue that the conversion of our black population to Christianity would be not only the most merciful, but the most just course to adopt; while, on the other hand, shepherds, stockmen, and even some of the squatters contend that you might as well try to civilize so many apes or baboons. The frequent sly and cowardly attacks of a tribe upon poor solitary shepherds, and the cruel method of dispatching them, adopted by the barbarous sable denizens of the desert, naturally provoke the whites to extreme indignation and horror, as well as excite them to feelings of more than ordinary revenge. Under such mournful circumstances it is difficult to bring the reasoning faculties into play. ... Churchmen may preach and labour too on the field of conversion, with the good object in view of gathering the black population into the folds of Christianity; but in the meanwhile our pioneers' domains are ransacked and plundered, their sheep and cattle speared and stolen wholesale; their hearths are assailed by overpowering numbers, and their servants are ruthlessly dispatched with the tomahawk. In the very earliest days of the settling of the Europeans in New South Wales, great pains were taken to conciliate the aboriginals and, in a few instances, success followed, but in a vast majority of cases they utterly failed. Notwithstanding that some were taken into employment, taught to read and write, and converted, as it was supposed, to Christianity, clothed, fed, and cared for; they left liberal masters, quiet homes, good fate, and even luxury, and returned to the primitive wild habits of bush life in preference. It is obvious from all the accounts we hear, that the native police are neither numerous nor formidable enough to check the slaughter of the aboriginals of the north. The ranks of aboriginals have no doubt, been much thinned of late years, and those still remaining have been driven from the coast to the lately settled north and the far interior. The loss of their hunting grounds has driven them at times to want, and they naturally look upon the whites as usurpers of their soil, and as their deadliest foes. Our government must fairly and honestly consider the claims that aboriginals have for the loss of their hunting-grounds, and the scanty means left to them to exist on; on the one hand, the Government must protect the white population as their tenants and principal exporters of the first staple articles of trade.¹⁹⁵

On 4 February 1867, the Commissioner made his third annual report on the police department with the following distribution of Native Police within the colony:

¹⁹⁵ 2 January 1867 p 2.

Queensland Native Police

Native Mounted Police 1866

Location	Lieut. Native Police	2 nd Lieut. Native Police	Sergeant	Troopers
<i>First Division</i>				
Rockhampton	1	1	1	6
Lower Dawson		1	1	5
Mackenzie		1	1	6
Upper Dawson		1	1	6
Broadsound		1	1	5
<i>Second Division</i>				
Comet & Nogoa	1	2	1	15
North Creek		1	1	6
Belyando		1	1	9
<i>Third Division</i>				
Bungil Creek	1	1 Cadet	1	10
Maranoa River		1	1	8
Warrego River		1	1	8
<i>Fourth Division</i>				
Sandgate		1	1	7
<i>Fifth Division</i>				
Bowen	1		2	7
Bowen River		1 Cadet	1	5
Total	4	2 Cadets, 12	15	103

Sub-Inspector Myrtil Aubin, of the Native Mounted Police, had a brush with the aboriginals. About early March 1867, he, with two troopers, were patrolling the upper banks of the Fitzroy when he was informed that a mob of the Broadsound, Mackay, and coast tribes had camped in the neighbourhood of the Bonnie Doon public house, between Marlborough and Yaamba, for the purpose of fighting their Rockhampton and Yaamba "brethren," and were bailing up foot passengers with threats and compelling them to hand over tobacco and "sispences." It was also reported that a lady, driven by her servant in a buggy past the place, had been stopped and frightened not only out of her small change, but almost out of her senses. Sub-Inspector Aubin made all haste to the neighbourhood and on arriving there found a congregation of from two to three hundred. He succeeded in dispersing them without any show of resistance, and they made tracks to Yaamba. He followed them, and with the assistance of Sergeant Haggerty, who was stationed at Yaamba, drove them out of the township. About four miles further down the river, the Sub-Inspector came on them again and with his two troopers rode into their midst. The blackfellows had however made up their minds to dispute any further efforts to remove them, and several of them shouted out "baal run away this time, by ——— mine kill him you, you ———." A shower of spears, boomerangs, and nullah nullahs followed the shout, and the police had to stomach a fair dose of the unpleasant physic. One of the nullah nullahs struck Sub-Inspector Aubin on the left hand, and tore away a large portion of the skin and flesh, and he with the troopers was obliged to use their firearms. One or two volleys were suggestion sufficient for the darkies to take leg bail; the greater portion of them jumped into the river and swam to the opposite bank, while the remainder made a scatter through the bush.¹⁹⁶

Miners began working the goldfield at Morinish, Rockhampton in December 1866 with an estimated population of 600 on the field. In June 1867, the newspapers of the day reported that a serious collision had occurred at the Morinish diggings between native police and the blacks

¹⁹⁶ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 12 March 1867 p 3.

causing alarm amongst the township. The Police Commissioner, Seymour on learning of this incident telegraphed Acting Sub-Inspector Aubin, Rockhampton on 19 June 1867 and asked Aubin the cause for the killing and wounding of the Blacks. Aubin duly replied by telegram. However, Aubin's explanation was unsatisfactory and he was suspended pending further explanation and inquiry per Seymour's telegram of 25 June 1867.

Acting Sub-Inspector Aubin's Report Relative to Collision with Blacks at Morinish Diggings of 12 June 1867, Dated 22 June 1867.

I have the honour to report a collision, which took place on the 12th instant at the Morinish Diggings, between a large mob of blacks and the troopers under my command. The blacks were dispersed by main force only, and under the following circumstances. A few days previous, I heard that a very large number of blacks were assembled at the Morinish Diggings, where they were of great annoyance to the people, committing daily petty robberies, and preventing the persons living nearest to their camps from sleeping, by keeping up fighting and corroborreeing sometimes during all night.

In the evening of the 11th instant, a Yaamba black and his gin, coming from the blacks' camp, went to a young married woman of the name of Mrs. Lefebore—her husband being out doing his daily work—and, on her refusal to give them what they were asking for, threatened to smash her skull, the blackfellow at the same time brandishing a sharp tomahawk—which, in a blackfellow's hands is a deadly weapon—over her head. I was told so by Mrs. Lefebore herself, and was shown the tomahawk.

I left Rockhampton on the 11th instant, and camped in the evening about three miles from Morinish. During the night I proceeded with my men near to the blacks' camp. I have four troopers; three of them have a double-barrel carbine. Every trooper had five blank cartridges and five ball cartridges. In my presence I made the three troopers with the double-barrel carbines load the first barrel with blank cartridge, the left with ball cartridge. The other trooper and myself, having a single-barrel carbine, loaded with ball.

Had it been my intention to shoot down blacks, I would have attacked them during the night, and could have carried the bodies, should anyone have been shot, out of sight, in the dark, before anyone would have known what was up; but, intending to do nothing but my duty, and disperse them without unnecessary violence, as I do anytime I meet such a large mob of blacks, I waited for daylight, and, when the day broke out, I went to the blacks' camp and had the three troopers with double-barrel carbine to fire off the first barrels, which were loaded with blank cartridges.

The blacks got up, rushed to their weapons, and several nullah nullahs were thrown at us—a blackfellow which I ascertained afterwards to go by the name of Tommy Pattison, hitting trooper Harry (78) on the left shoulder so very hard that the trooper felt pain during several days; another nullah nullah whistled over my head. Seeing the aggressive countenance of the blacks, I, in order to protect my men's lives and my own, ordered a volley.

We fired five shots in the direction of the humpies, from which most of the weapons had been thrown at us. I found, after the blacks had dispersed, three dead bodies, lying in different places; they, very likely, having tried to run away after having been shot.

The blackfellow, Tommy Pattison, I found dead in a small waterhole, a few yards from the humpies at which we fired. As to wounded, if there were any, they got away, and I did not see them. Some blacks I heard shouting in their own language to some other blacks still standing in a hostile position about fifty yards from us, and they dispersed.

The troopers were perfectly under my control during the whole of the affray, which did not last more than a few minutes. The troopers were seen scattered over the bush, but that was by my orders; I having told them to look what was in the deserted humpies.

People came to the blacks' camp early in the morning and saw, they say, the blackfellow Pattison lying dead in the waterhole. I am under the firm impression that I have done nothing but my duty. Myrtil Aubin, Acting Sub-Inspector

Seymour sent Aubin's above report to the Colonial Secretary on 1 July 1867 seeking further instructions in the matter. The Colonial Secretary referred the matter to the Governor in Council

for action. On 5 July 1867 the Council advised that Mr Myrtil Aubin was to be immediately dismissed. Chief Inspector GPM Murray, Rockhampton on 13 July 1867 advised Seymour as follows:

Chief Inspector Murray, N. M. P., to the Commissioner, Relative to Inquiry on Conduct of Sub-Inspector Aubin, Rockhampton, 13 July 1867.

I have the honour to inform you that I have been to Morinish, and held an inquiry into the conduct of Acting Sub-Inspector Aubin, respecting the late collision between the native mounted police under his command and the blacks, and herewith enclose the evidence and Mr. Aubin's report.

There is nothing in the evidence to show whether Mr. Aubin was justified or not in firing on the blacks, but from his own report, and taking into consideration the whole of the circumstances, I cannot see that that officer could have acted otherwise, as had he not fired at the time he did, the blacks would without doubt have killed some if not all of his party.

It was clearly Mr. Aubin's duty to disperse that mob of blacks, and it is very much to be regretted that he did not do so quietly. I have always considered Mr. Aubin to be an active, steady, energetic officer, and with regard to duty, I have hitherto found him very correct.

Seymour only provided Murray's above report to the Colonial Secretary on 26 August 1867, well after the government had decided to dismiss Aubin. Needless to say, Aubin was not reinstated.

Charles Cowper (1834-1911) operated a run in the western district of Warrego. He laid a charge against Mr. W. R. O. Hill of having shot in cold blood a blackfellow whom Hill had in charge as a prisoner. William Richard Onslow Hill was appointed an Acting Sub-Inspector in the Native Police to the Yo Yo Creek barracks forty miles from Charleville in 1866. The barracks were later moved to the Bulloo River at Thargomindah under Inspector Gilmour. Mr. A Palmer (Col Sec) laid on the table of the House copies of the correspondence relating to the charge brought against acting Sub-Inspector Hill of shooting a blackfellow, which was asked for by the hon. member for Maryborough [William Henry Walsh (1823-1888)]. William Walsh was a strong opponent of the Native Police and took every opportunity to attack and criticise the Native Police. However, within the correspondence tabled was the following letter which completely refuted the charge against William Hill:

Yowah Creek, 11th November, 1867.

My dear Hill, I was very much surprised to hear from Gilmour, this morning, that you had been suspended on account of the arrest of the blackfellow on the Yowah Creek, sometime about the end of August last.

I think I wrote you a short note some time ago, stating that the blackfellow reported by the blacks as having been taken by you had returned to the camp, and I, again, beg to express my regret that any further notice should have been taken regarding him. You are at liberty to use this note at any time, should it be required; and, hoping to see you safe back here, again, soon, I am, &c., Wm. H. Rolstone.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Hansard, Assembly, 28 November 1867 p 660. William Hill was the older brother of Cecil Hill the Native Police officer murdered by the blacks on 23 May 1865.

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Parliament sat during January. The House resumed as a committee of supply on 15 January and Mr Palmer proposed that the sum of £30,619 be granted for salaries of the police. This was a reduction in the force because the House wished for the strictest economy to be exercised. Mr Exeter Hall, himself, William Walsh, the member for Maryborough, immediately went into anaphylactic shock. He sought a postponement for a day or two of the vote.

He objected "in toto" to the continuation of the Native Police force. It was not such a force as we ought to have for our protection. Here we were employing 99 savages as a protective force. He protested against employing 99 men as police constables, who were incapable of giving evidence, to whom an oath would not be administered, men whose creed was to eat their fellow creatures. What was the effect of employing men who defied their officers, defied the law, and went out and shot down innocent blacks, whenever it was their whim to do so? ... In the far north, at the present time, there was a perfect slaughter of the blacks being carried on; according to the information he had received. No doubt he should be contradicted, as was always the case in that House when anything was said against the Native Police. No one ever proved that a single native trooper ever shot a black, but there was no doubt of the fact, notwithstanding hundreds and hundreds were shot every year. They never heard of the Native Police ever capturing any prisoners; none were ever brought to trial. What did they do with them? He trusted the Government would allow this vote to be postponed.¹⁹⁸

If Mr Walsh had taken leave of his senses, then Mr. Thomas Blacket Stephens, the member for South Brisbane, had gone troppo. He said:

that unless the Colonial Secretary would allow the vote for Native Police to be postponed, he should be compelled to move an amendment. That force was constantly shooting down persons against whom no charge was brought. It was generally admitted that the Native Police were used and maintained as a force for the extermination of the blacks. It was also admitted that it was an illegal force. He would, therefore, move that the item be reduced by the sum of £3564 for salaries of the Native Police troopers. He had no desire to leave the outside squatters unprotected, for he felt sure that the House would willingly vote double the sum to organize a really effective protective force.¹⁹⁹

Mr Stephens' proposal was put and lost and the original question carried. Mr. Palmer replied:

He had invariably found that these stories of atrocities committed by the Native Police had no foundation in fact. A great deal of the talk about the matter resulted from the braggadocio of the officers. The force was absolutely necessary, and if it was got rid of, irreparable injury would be done to the pioneer squatters, and also to the outside gold diggers at the Cape. The country in which the force was employed contributed a large amount to the revenue; it got nothing for it except the services of a small force and an occasional mail. The black troopers were, on the contrary, considered to be a terror both to aboriginal offenders and to white cattle and horse stealers.²⁰⁰

On 4 February 1868, Commissioner Seymour submitted his Annual Report upon the Police Force for the past year (1867) and said:

During the last twelve months there have been few changes of any importance. ... With regard to the Native Police, about which a great deal has lately been said and written, I can only say that, with the means at command, every exertion has been made to render it as effective as possible; and any want of success has been caused, not by the inefficiency of the force, but by its weakness. The detachments are too small and too far apart to patrol properly the extensive area of country that they are supposed to protect. The Acting Sub-Inspectors, who were appointed in lieu of the old camp

¹⁹⁸ The Brisbane Courier 16 January 1868 p 3 & Warwick Examiner and Times 25 January 1868 p 4.

¹⁹⁹ Brisbane Courier 16 January 1868 p 3.

²⁰⁰ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 18 January 1868 p 4.

sergeants, and with the same pay, with a view of selecting the most promising for promotion, were not intended to go out on patrol with a senior officer, until perfectly acquainted with their duty, but it has frequently been found necessary, on emergency, to send them out or to refuse urgently requested assistance, and with the exception of one or two mistakes, more of over zeal than carelessness or inefficiency, those officers have performed their duty satisfactorily. This force, as well as the ordinary police, has been much reduced for the year 1868; but I feel confident that the work cannot be done with the force proposed, and that, before the close of the year, the Government will have found it necessary to increase it considerably.

Mr Stephens, the member for South Brisbane, it seems had not purged himself of his indignation over the Native Police and on 6 February, moved three resolutions regarding the native police. The first question was: "That in the opinion of this House, the working of the native police force is unsatisfactory; that the employment, in the presence of one white man only, of a number of armed aboriginal troopers, whose evidence cannot be taken in a court of justice, does not give sufficient check upon the actions of the force, and thus leads to acts both unnecessary and illegal, at the same time reducing its efficiency as a protective force." Somewhat to the surprise of Stephens and the Colonial Secretary, the resolution was put and the house divided 8 Ayes and 12 Noes. The Ayes were Dr Doherty, Dr Chalinor and Messrs Macalister, Douglas, Clark, Pugh & Walsh, Exeter Hall incorporated. This was by no means the end of the debate as two more resolution had to be put. The debate covers approximately 15 pages of Hansard.²⁰¹ The black armband brigade has peddled all sorts of conspiracy theories concerning the then Queensland colonial government; alleging that the government ran illegal extermination operations against Aborigines similar to the modern-day clandestine units of the Haitian Tonton Macoute, the Shah's Savak and the East German Stasi. This debate clearly demonstrated that law enforcement issues regarding Aborigines were conducted in a freely elected parliament, in front of a free press and was subject to at all times the established constitutional checks and balance of English democracy. There were no conspiracies to exterminate Aborigines perpetrated by the Queensland colonial government at any stage of its existence.

Although the Native Police remained a vexata quaestio for the George Street polities, no such doubts or scruples ever dimmed the appetite of the Aborigines for making fast-and-loose with the squatters' livestock and shepherds. Messrs. Cook and Ross, the proprietors of Balnagowan cattle station, situated some twelve miles west from Mackay, in early January 1868 had occasion to ride over a part of the run where the blacks had been in the habit of attacking the cattle, at various times previously, and looking around they found the remains of a beast which had been killed. Some few minutes after this discovery a herd of cattle consisting of about four hundred head, were seen rushing headlong in a disorderly and affrighted state towards the homestead, and their owner found it impossible to round them up until the harassed and disturbed animals had galloped a distance of nearly eight miles. Mr. Cook at once rode into town and sent a telegram to the officer in charge of the troopers stationed at Nebo.²⁰² In March, the blacks again visited the Balnagowan run and were spearing and hunting the cattle within a mile of the head station. When confronted, these aggressors took to their heels, finding refuge in the scrub. Some spears were picked up near the spot where the blacks had attacked the cattle, but no search was made for any dead or wounded bovines. A telegram was urgently sent to the Nebo Barracks.²⁰³

In early February, Sub-Inspector Isley, with a detachment of Native Police, arrived in Mackay after patrolling the country between Mackay and Bowen. The presence of the Police was required as a result of depredations on stations to the north and west of Mackay which had been seriously

²⁰¹ Hansard LA, 6 February 1868 pp 948-962.

²⁰² Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 11 January 1868 p 2.

²⁰³ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 7 March 1868 p 2.

detrimental to the squatters. A party of Police belonging to the Fort Cooper, Nebo N. P. Station, under Acting Sub-Inspector Robert Johnstone, had also been patrolling parts of the district where the blacks had proved hostile.²⁰⁴

Messrs. Rawson Brother's cattle station, Shamrock Vale, about twenty-five miles west from Mackay, was attacked by a mob of myalls. The blacks ransacked a skillion and carried off various articles of clothing, rugs, axes, &c. The principal rooms of the homestead were not entered. Consequent upon the timely appearance of a gentleman, who was riding some distance from the "bailed up" station, his presence caused the blacks to decamp. Mr. R. Martin of Hamilton Station, and a stockman, started in pursuit of the blacks and followed their tracks for six miles; but the difficulties of the country and there being so many impenetrable scrubs deterred the pursuers from following them any further. A telegram was sent to the Native Police officer at Nebo, and the troopers arrived at Shamrock Vale the next day.²⁰⁵

The country around Bowen also experienced unwanted attention from the myalls. Crystal Brook Station, situated about thirty miles to the north of Bowen, on 3 March, whilst Mr. Palmer, the superintendent of the station and a stockmen were absent on an inspection of the run, a large body of blacks, supposed to number over one hundred, ransacked every room from the kitchen to the sleeping apartments, overturning bags of flour, breaking tea boxes, ripping open bags of sugar and scattering these stores in every direction and taking off with the empty bags, packages, &c. No provisions were stolen it seems, but the cunning black thieves managed to lay their hands upon the saving of an unlucky stockman and carried it away with them, besides several metal household utensils. Towards the close of the day, Mr. Palmer and his companion approached the station, but perceiving that the blacks were too numerous, they hastily turned their horses' heads, and rode off with all speed to Bowen to notify the Native Police. The Police were quickly on the station, the blacks of course had fled in the meantime, but their tracks were followed.²⁰⁶

One of the most sensational trials of its time was the murder trial of Thomas John Griffin at the Circuit Court, Rockhampton, commencing 18 March 1868 and proceeding for seven days. Upwards of sixty witnesses were subpoenaed, all of whom were not called. Griffin was charged with the wilful murder of two men, Patrick Cahill and John Power, on the 6th November 1867, who at the time were troopers in the Gold Escort between Clermont and Rockhampton. Shortly before 17 November, the prisoner was a Police Magistrate and Gold Commissioner at Clermont, but at the time of the commission of the murder he was not holding that position, but had left Clermont for Rockhampton to fill another appointment. What is of interest in this case is the involvement of the Native Police; another example clearly demonstrating that the Native Police were often involved in general police duty. The evidence given in court was that:

The camp had been well examined, and the officers of the native police were enabled, with the aid of their bush experience, and the black loamy nature of the soil, which would retain tracks in dry weather for three weeks, to glean evidence from the camp. It would be recollected that prisoner told Bedford he had lost himself for an hour. Griffin has a small foot, and by it his course was tracked from the camp towards a little lagoon or waterhole, and past an old grove there, away from the camp and from the direction of the public house; he was tracked to a log where he had sat down. He then retraced his steps from the log to a point of the track leading to the public-house. There was not another track except the prisoner's own outside the camp. That certainly upset prisoner's statements, because if Power were out looking for the horses his tracks would also be seen, prisoner's boots had been measured and fitted exactly to the tracks.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 1 February 1868 p 2.

²⁰⁵ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 28 March 1868 p 2.

²⁰⁶ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 2 April 1868 p 2.

²⁰⁷ Brisbane Courier 31 March 1868 p 3

True to the old adage, crime never pays; Griffin was hanged at Rockhampton on 1 June 1868 after being convicted of the murders. As to the Native Police, it was said:

by the creditable foresight of Inspectors Stokes and Uhr, who had examined the ground and tracked the assassin's footsteps four days before it was possible for the police to reach the ground, and the importance of which cannot be too highly estimated, as without it, the evidence would have been incomplete.²⁰⁸ Government recognised the following as being the chief cause in bringing the crime home to Griffin. A sum of £100 was granted to Sub-Inspector Elliott; to Sub-Inspector Uhr, £75; to acting Sub-Inspector Stokes, £50; to Sergeant Judge, £15, and to Detective Kilfeder, £25. Sub-Inspector Uhr, whilst in Brisbane, was also presented by the Hon. Mr. Pring, with a handsome sword belt, and sword mounted in silver, and by the Hon. Mr. Lilley, with a set of law books.²⁰⁹

The largess lavished on Reginald Charles Uhr did not go without comment and it was considered unfair because Uhr was no more deserving than anyone else:

Much stress is laid upon the tracking of Griffin's footsteps to the log where he was said to have gone from the camp and from the log to Bedford's. It was Sub-Inspector Stokes, with trooper Wellington, who found them on the morning of the day after the bodies had been temporarily interred. At this time, Uhr was on his way to town to inform Elliott of the murders. It was after his return from Westwood that he visited the camp, when he was shown the tracks by the trooper (Wellington), who certainly, although a black trooper, is deserving of something more substantial than generally falls to the lot of sagacious, intelligent and able native troopers. Without this man, the tracks in all probability would not have been found. Uhr takes to himself the credit of Stokes and this trooper's exertions, and suffers himself to be bespattered and bedaubed with the fulsome encomiums and praises of the people of Brisbane, and accepts the ornaments and presents of the present Attorney-General of Queensland.

[We stated that Mr. Elliott, Mr. Uhr, and Mr. Stokes, were the officers to whose exertions was mainly due the successful prosecution of Griffin. We gave the facts regarding the presents to Mr. Uhr, in Brisbane, as we found them, without any comment. We are glad our correspondent has shown who deserved the credit of the discovery. He has forgotten that Mr. Uhr travelled from the Mackenzie to Westwood in ten hours, with his arm in a sling. He did his work well. But it cannot be denied that he profited by going to Brisbane, and we regret that Mr. Stokes has not an uncle a Colonial Treasurer, or a friend an Attorney-General. He might have got the extra £25 if he had been so lucky. ED.]²¹⁰

In February, Native Police under the command of Acting Sub-Inspector Johnstone were engaged in a search for a South Sea Islander supposed to have been murdered by his countryman near the Alexandra Plantation, at Mackay. The police came across several bones and other remains of a human body about a quarter of a mile from the Plantation and about the same distance from the spot where the murdered Islander was found. These bones had not a particle of flesh adhering to them and lay scattered in various directions. The Police were of the view that they belonged to the missing man and further that he had been murdered and his flesh had been cooked and afterwards eaten. The proof as to the cooking was testified by a hole which was found and near it there was a number of stones presenting the appearance of having been subjected to the action of fire. A log lying a few yards from the oven, was believed to have been used for the purpose of hacking up the body into pieces before being roasted, as the wood was cut in several places; also that some of the bones picked up by the Police were not whole, but had been chopped in two or three parts. At that time, no magisterial investigation had taken place.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Northern Argus 30 March 1868 p 2.

²⁰⁹ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 14 May 1868 p 2.

²¹⁰ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 26 May 1868 p 3.

²¹¹ Northern Argus 15 February 1868 p 2.

The murder of Messrs. Gibbie and Bell of Conway station, near Bowen, in June 1868 led the Native Police in pursuit of South Sea Islanders once again, rather than myall blacks as the perpetrators did not plunder the bodies at all, nor did they molest a German lad who was shepherding at no very great distance. As the Islanders had absconded, they were tracked for a considerable distance, apparently making for another station, where some of their countrymen were employed. The Native Police, under Sub-Inspector Frederick Johnston Murray, followed the four South Sea Islanders and telegraphed Brisbane that he had succeeded in capturing two of the murderers on 12 July, and as far as he could learn from the captives, it appeared that the other two Islanders were dead in the bush, one having died from the effects of a gunshot wound. The body of the other was found in the bush, but in such a decomposed state that it was impossible to ascertain the cause of death. One of the prisoners died as he was being conveyed into Bowen, but the other arrived safely, and was handed over to the police.²¹² The surviving Islander, Matuka, faced committal proceedings at Bowen but his ultimate fate is undiscoverable.²¹³

The reader may recall that in 1866, Sub-Inspector Compigne of Rockhampton NP had a number of collisions with the blacks at Torilla. The station belonged to Mr. Newbold, and was situated in the Broadsound district, about eighty miles from Rockhampton, on the coast. The blacks were noted for their daring in that part of the country, and the thick mangrove scrubs, the salt water creeks, and the islands on the coast afforded them protection from the Native Police. In February a telegram was received from Rockhampton: "The head station at Torilla has been attacked by blacks, in number about forty. Young Newbold has been dangerously wounded with a tomahawk. Nothing but great pluck on his part and on that of the other few whites saved the lives of all there. Further outrages are anticipated. The general belief here is that the Native Police should not be withdrawn."²¹⁴

The *Northern Argus* took the matter up and reported the incident as follows:

We are sorry to have to state that Mr. Newbold, who was lately so seriously wounded in the murderous attack made by the blacks upon Torilla, is still lying in a very dangerous state, hovering between life and death. We have no doubt that those pinchbeck Exeter Hall twaddlers, Messrs. W. H. Walsh and Co., hail Mr. Newbold's wounds as dispensations of Providence and acts of retributive justice for not allowing those hellish fiends to grease their stinking carcasses with his caul fat, and after they had made their Tarquinian overtures, to rip up the bodies of the women and children upon the station — a favourite pastime with the "poor blacks," as the Hornet Bank and other tragedies can testily to. It will also please them to hear that from the date of the outrage no notice has been taken by the Native Police for the simple reason that there are none to be had — our enlightened legislators having completely destroyed the force by their senseless reforms. The order given to the officers of the force to use blank cartridge in their skirmishes with the niggers, has had a most disastrous effect so far as the white man is concerned, for the blacks are impressed with the belief that such leniency can only arise from fear (a savage cannot possibly appreciate any higher motive), and have therefore become proportionality emboldened, and we will yet have some charming results from this blank cartridge system. It's all very well for men who know nothing of frontier life, or indeed bush life, (since the introduction of this black humanity humbug — and very black it is, in all conscience) to make up their books with Old Nick in the decline of life. Black philanthropy won't wash — it's Burrum Burrum all over.²¹⁵

²¹² Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 30 July 1868 p 3.

²¹³ Brisbane Courier 15 August 1868 p 6.

²¹⁴ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 8 February 1868 p 3.

²¹⁵ Northern Argus 2 March 1868 p 2.

The Burketown correspondent of 16 April 1868 filed the following report:

I much regret to state that the blacks have become very troublesome about here lately. Within ten miles of this place they speared and cut steaks from the rumps of several horses. As soon as it was known, the Native Police, under Sub-Inspector Wentworth D'Arcy Uhr,²¹⁶ went out, and, I am informed, succeeded in shooting upwards of thirty blacks. No sooner was this done, than a report came in that Mr. Cannon had been murdered by blacks, at Liddle and Hetzer's station, near Normanton. Mr. Uhr went off immediately in that direction, and his success I hear was complete. One mob of fourteen he rounded up; another mob of nine, and a last mob of eight, he succeeded with his troopers in shooting. In the latter lot there was one black who would not die after receiving eighteen or twenty bullets, but a trooper speedily put an end to his existence by smashing his skull. In the camp of the last lot of blacks, Mr. Uhr found a compass belonging to a Mr. Manson of the Norma, and a revolver belonging to a Chinaman. He then followed the tracks of the sheep, Manson and the Chinaman had a short time before passed with, and in a waterhole found the bodies of poor Manson and the Chinaman cut about and mutilated in a most frightful manner. Cameron's body has also been found. In this expedition I am informed Mr. Uhr was accompanied by Mr. Hetzer, who has been very kind and indulgent to the myalls for a long time, but now sees his folly. Everybody in the district is delighted with the wholesale slaughter dealt out by the native police, and thank Mr. Uhr for his energy in ridding the district of fifty-nine (59) myalls. Cassidy's station, on the Upper Leichhardt, has also been attacked, and one man speared. Albert Downs station, on the Gregory, was also attacked by blacks a short time back, and all the fire arms, axes, and chisels taken off.²¹⁷

Of course, the above news article provoked an uproar, which resulted in Reginald Uhr, Wentworth Uhr's brother, approaching the newspaper, the *Queenslander* with letters of denial:

We have been shown some letters received from Mr. R. C. Uhr, of the Native Mounted Police, by his family in Brisbane. They contain positive and indignant denials of the charges made against Mr. Uhr in a letter which appeared in our columns in July last. The letter in question emanated from a Burke Town correspondent of ours, and reported Mr. Uhr as the leader in a wholesale massacre of "Myalls." Mr. Uhr courts inquiry into the charge, and for his sake and the sake of humanity the public will be glad to find the allegation disproved.²¹⁸

THE MURDER OF THE CHINAMAN AT BURKETOWN. MR. D'ARCY UHR'S EXPLANATION TO THE EDITOR OF THE *BRISBANE COURIER*.

Sir, I have lately been furnished with a copy of evidence given by a man named Manson, before the select committee regarding the working management of the police; and I now beg your permission to allow me to make a few remarks respecting the examination.

I started from Rockhampton, en route for the Gulf of Carpentaria, on December 22, 1865, accompanied by W. Landsborough and five troopers. I travelled with Mr. Landsborough as far as Bowen Downs, where he left me on March 5, 1866. With the intention of shortening the road to Carpentaria, I proceeded with my troopers, and arrived at Burketown on April 11, 1866. I camped some three miles from the township, and awaited the arrival of my inspector. On April 17, 1866, Mr. Landsborough and Mr. Phillips arrived. On April 19 I had to remove my camp up the Albert River some fifteen miles, to a point marked on the chart as Hope Reach. This I did by Mr. Landsborough's orders. About May 7, one and all my men were seized with low fever. On April 20, Mr. Landsborough started for Sweer's Island, with a view of forming a settlement, which he did.

On May 10, I went into Burketown from my camp, and found every one more or less helpless. I met Mr. Blakeney, who was pilot up here, and he asked me if I could do anything for himself and wife, as they were both so bad with fever that he was unable to do anything. I immediately visited

²¹⁶ Reginald Charles Uhr, NP was his brother.

²¹⁷ *Queenslander* 13 June 1868 p 7.

²¹⁸ *Queenslander* 28 November 1868 p 5. W. D. Uhr was reduced to A/Sub-Inspector on 21/11/68, QPG Vol. VI 3/3/69 No 3 p 20; and resigned on 29 March 1869, QPG Vol. VI 7 July 1869 No 7 p 48.

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Mr. Blakeney's house and found Mrs. Blakeney in a dying state; her wish being to get to the island, I, together with her husband, went and got a small boat, and started that night. I took charge of the boat.

The number of sick men and women I took to Sweer's Island were as follows: Messrs. Blakeney, Thompson, Ellis, Hardie, Davis, two black troopers, Mrs. Blakeney and child, and one trooper's wife. Mr. Nelstron and I had to manage the working of the boat.

I arrived at the island on the 12th May; returned to Burketown on the 7th June. On the following day I visited my camp and found it upside down. My favourite trooper, Tommy Curtis, had died only two hours before I arrived.

I had to set to work and bury him myself, as no one in the camp was able to walk; in fact, I had to cook and do everything. On the 9th June I went to town and returned with medicines.

On the 12th June I removed my camp to Beames Brook Station, as had I been taken ill at the camp that Mr. Landsborough selected, I should have been unable to get any assistance.

On the 23rd July Mr. Landsborough returned from Sweers' Island.

On the 29th July I started in pursuit of two horse-stealers, Duffey and Holt. On the 13th of September I arrested Duffey and recovered all the stolen horses—ten. I took one of my troopers 800 miles with me; finding it difficult to get a supply of horses for both, I proceeded alone until I arrested prisoner on the borders of New South Wales. I then pursued Holt, accompanied by his mate, Duffey. I followed him nearly on to the Castlereagh River, New South Wales, and got within a day's stage of him. My horses being very sore-footed, and being unable to get a fresh supply, I feared I might lose the prisoner I had, so I went into Fort Bourke, on the Darling River, and gave prisoner up to Sub-Inspector Zouch, on the 26th September. On the 27th, prisoner was remanded to Queensland. I got a special constable sworn in, and returned to the Barcoo. On the 23rd October, 1866, I delivered prisoner to sub-inspector Morisset, at Northampton Downs, on the Barcoo River, and went on my return to Carpentaria. On November 19th I arrived at Burketown, on my return from New South Wales, and reported myself to Mr. Landsborough.

On the 23rd November I proceeded to Sweers' Island, with a view of exploring Bentinck Island, by my inspector's orders, and returned to Burketown December 13.

18th December, arrested Williamson, charged with the wilful murder of Charles Molloy. Williamson was sent to Sweers' Island for safe keeping. Prisoner Duffey was forwarded by the Salamander, I think, to Sweers' Island, to stand his trial for horse-stealing. On being informed of his arrival, I started again for the island, with the view of getting him committed and returned to Rockhampton. I found on my arrival at the island that both Williamson and Duffey had affected their escape from G. F. Sandrock, Sub-collector of Customs, by means of an open boat. I finished my business as quickly as possible with Mr. Landsborough, and there being no immediate means of getting to the mainland, I employed a man, and gave him four pounds out of my own pocket, to accompany me in a small open boat up to Burketown; got to Burketown about 21 February, 1867.

I remained there, "hail fellow well met" with all of the rowdies then there, up to the 6th March, 1867. I left town before daylight on that day, unknown to any one, and alone, having learnt where I would be likely to get traces of the escaped prisoners. I travelled night and day, visiting no stations, and disguising myself as much as possible. I had to take some rations from a shepherd's hut, which I afterwards acquainted them of. I came up to the prisoners on the 12th March, a distance of 420 miles from Burketown, and with little trouble re-captured both of them. You will perceive by the above dates that I accomplished the distance of 420 miles in six days.

Before I go any further, I may remark that I had no sergeant or anyone else to leave in charge of my troopers when I was called away on duty, therefore my Native Police could do as they wished until I returned. I reported this matter frequently to my inspector. Well, now I have arrived at the month of the supposed murder of Jemmy Ching. Jemmy Ching's murder was first reported to me about 300 miles from Burketown. I was on my road down at the time with prisoners. I hurried down as fast as my horses would permit, and returned to Burketown about the 1st April. I endeavoured to gain sufficient evidence to support an arrest, and was unable to do so.

I went and examined the river on both sides, both on horseback and with a boat, and could find no traces. I reported the whole of the evidence I collected to Mr. Landsborough, and asked his advice; he said I had no grounds for a warrant. Had I arrested them I had no lock-up or even a single pair of handcuffs. Strange to say, now the Chinaman's case has been taken up, the witnesses who were with Jimmy, from the time he was chained up to the time of his crossing the river, are never

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summoned. Mr. Thompson, in town here during the whole time of their examination, is the man who tied Jimmy up, assisted by others. I do not feel surprised at Manson's style of evidence towards myself, as he and I quarrelled frequently on board of his "old barge," during my trip south with him. W. D'arcy Uhr. Norman, December 27, 1869.

[Mr. Uhr will perceive that we have cut from his letter everything relating to his quarrel with sub-inspector Coward, and the circumstance under which he left the Police Force. Some of the eliminated sentences are libellous, and even though Mr. Coward might not be disposed to enter an action against us for inserting such charges, it would still be grossly unjust on our part to give them publicity, because, as a servant of the Government, he has not the opportunity of replying. If the charges can be substantiated it is clearly the duty of Mr. Uhr to forward a statement of them to the Colonial Secretary without delay. ED. B.C.]²¹⁹

On 6 August 1868, Mr. Palmer (Col Sec) laid upon the table a copy of the Statistical Register of Queensland for 1867. The following table shows the distribution of the Native Police for 1867:

Location	Rank	Name	Dated apptd to Location
Brisbane	Commissioner	DT Seymour	
Albert River	A Sub-Inspector Troopers	W Uhr five	1 November 1865
Barcoo River	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	AL Morisset EB Seymour five	25 May 1863 10 April 1865
Belyando River	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	M Armstrong J McKay Dunne six	24 December 1862 7 February 1866
Bowen	Inspector Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	John Marlow FJ Murray John B Isley FM Tompson twelve	1 January 1864 2 March 1865 4 July 1865 1 July 1866
Burdekin River	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	Edward Wheeler Fred Nantes five	19 November 1864 1 March 1866
Dawson River	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	R Freudenthal H Fitzgerald five	24 December 1862 14 November 1865
Lynd River & Cardwell	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	John Murray CN Sharp HB Gough (not stated)	1 July 1864 24 October 1865 1 July 1866
Mackenzie River	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	RC Uhr RW Stokes six	1 January 1864 20 June 1865
Maranoa	Chief Inspector A Sub-Inspector Sergeant Constable Troopers	Henry Browne James Hodgson One One five	1 April 1862
Nebo, Fort Cooper	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	George F Price Robert Johnstone seven	
Paroo River	A Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	James M Gilmour WR Onslow Hill eight	25 November 1865 1 October 1866
Rockhampton	A Sub-Inspector Troopers	M Aubin four	1 July 1865

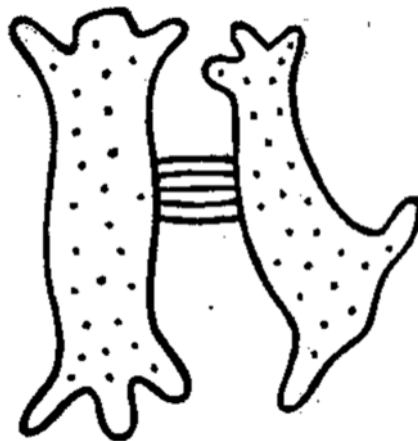
²¹⁹ Brisbane Courier 10 May 1870 p 3.

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Springsure & Comet	Chief Inspector A Inspector A Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	GPM Murray John B Nutting Henry Z Finch Alfred Henry seven	1 October 1857 1 January 1864 14 November 1865 15 January 1866
Waverly, Broadsound	Inspector Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	Fred Wheeler Walter Compigne William Frazer eight	22 July 1864 27 June 1865 6 March 1867
Yo Yo Creek	Sub-Inspector Sergeant Troopers	Thomas Thornton Bernard Carney seven	29 May 1865 15 May 1864
Suttor River	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Troopers	Thomas Coward LJA Poingdestre five	14 September 1864 13 June 1865

Commissioner Seymour, after returning from an inspection tour of police establishments in the northern district, sent his report of the tour dated 3 June 1868 to the Colonial Secretary who tabled the report and by order of Legislative Assembly of 5 August 1868 it was ordered to be printed. The report is a short document worthy of perusal and demonstrates how quickly the dynamics of the northern settlements were changing because of the discovery of gold and the consequent influx of additional populations. Perhaps the following is a worthy portion of the report for quoting:

The coast country all along from Townsville to Mackay is inhabited by blacks of the most hostile character. On some of the stations north of Bowen, such as Woodstock, Salisbury Plains, and some others, it is almost impossible to keep any cattle on the runs; and south of Bowen some stations are or were about to be abandoned, in consequence of the destruction of property by the blacks. I was consequently unable, as was intended, to remove the native police from those districts. The force is now so arranged that I am in hopes that the owners of property along this part of the coast will feel more secure in future. Two flying detachments having a double supply of horses have been established, having no settled camp or barracks, one of which will patrol constantly between Townsville and Bowen; the other from Bowen to Mackay. In the town of Bowen, I have made a reduction in the number of constables, as, owing to the opening of Cleveland Bay, the trade and population of Bowen has decreased considerably. ... As will be seen from the above, a considerable increase to the police force in the northern districts will be necessary.



1869

began with a new government in the form of Sir Charles Lilley (1827 – 1897) as Premier. The *Queenslander* offered the following advice:

The new Ministry it is hoped will do something in the matter of affording relief to run-holders who find themselves placed in circumstances in which at present there is little hope of redress. The Native Police are inadequate in point of numerical strength, and have been so for years. The only way of securing graziers from the daring raids they are so often exposed to, would be for the Government to establish a stronger police force, so that the district might be better and more frequently patrolled.²²⁰

However, the Aborigines remained addicted to their wanton ways. Mr. JS Collins, a squatter who was travelling with sheep, had for some time past been camped at North Creek, Isaac River district. It appeared the unfortunate gentleman had encouraged the blacks to come into the station, thinking them harmless, but he was murdered while looking for a horse. The body was found by one of the shepherds with a bridle near it. The back part of the head was split open by a tomahawk. The blacks also carried away a quantity of rations, etc. The shepherd reported the matter to Fort Cooper, Nebo and Sub-Inspector Johnstone at once started for the station.²²¹ The Fort Cooper detachment of Native Police was subsequently placed under the command of Acting Sub-Inspector Wheeler (senior officer) and Acting Sub-Inspector Dunne²²² after the resignation of Sub-Inspector Johnstone.²²³ The *Mackay Mercury* reported that the blacks had been again giving trouble to the proprietors of the Bloomsbury cattle station, and had speared several beasts quite close to the homestead. St Helen's station had also been visited and cattle slaughtered:

... the blacks caring little for the native troopers stationed in the neighbourhood. The Bloomsbury detachment "lacks the essentials of a protective force, otherwise the outrages committed could not be so numerous; the blacks are in great numbers and are not particular whether they spear a man or a beast," and a native police officer has a hard duty to perform in protecting the property of the coast squatters, but unless his duty be performed— and that promptly — and a thorough patrolling kept up, so far as circumstances will permit, the police can only be regarded as perfectly useless. But for all this — according to Mr. Lilley— the country is completely protected, and no complaints are made in any part of Queensland.²²⁴

On 2 February 1869, Commissioner Seymour sent in his annual report for 1868 which was presented to both Houses. Seymour advised as follows on the Native Police:

The Native Police, however, is far below the strength necessary to perform the duty required of them, continual complaints are made of the non-compliance of the officers in charge with the requisition for assistance. I can only repeat what I stated in my last yearly report, the detachments are too small and too far apart to patrol properly the extensive area of country that requires protection.

The following case of Edward H Baker who occupied the station known as Peninsular about fifty miles north of Rockhampton in the Broadsound area might be seen as an example of the

²²⁰ *Queenslander* 16 January 1869 p 7.

²²¹ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 12 Jan 1869 p 3.

²²² Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 11 May 1869 p 3.

²²³ Letter from Johnstone, Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 20 August 1870 p 4.

²²⁴ Northern Argus 31 May 1869 p 2.

complaints Seymour was referring to in his above annual report. On 22 February 1869, Baker wrote to Seymour as follows:

In March (1868) the blacks rushed my cattle and killed 50 head; the fright given the whole herd on that occasion so unsettled the cattle that there have been no fat ones for sale since. Strange cattle coming here fatten very quickly. Yesterday morning, 22nd February, at break of day two blacks were seen close to the hut (within 29 yards) armed with spears and naked, and had it not been for a small watch dog which gave the alarm the occupants would have been killed beyond a doubt. The cattle are dispersed all over the country and will not settle down to rest and fatten for many months. The blacks have some systematic means of destroying the cattle as they disappear in mobs. Mr. Wheeler, junior, who partrols [sic] this run, declines to go out on the run, he merely comes to the homestead from the nearest station and the following day goes on to the next; he says these are his orders and that has no authority to do otherwise, and that he is bound to call at all the stations by turns whether they are troubled by blacks or not. Having pointed out to you the position in which this district now stands with regard to the aborigines, I would in addition remark that the gold diggers are more or less scattered over the greater portion of this district, rendering all apprehension of attacks by the blacks more remote, owing to the assistance people living in a more populous locality are able to give one another, a fact of which the blacks are quite aware. I must now therefore leave it to your judgment whether some reform in the tactics of the force under your command, for this district has not now from change of circumstances become desirable.²²⁵

In reply, Seymour advised Baker that there were only so much the native police could do and it was incumbent on Baker to take reasonable and prudent steps to protect himself and his property. Baker would not let the matter rest and replied to Seymour as follows:

In reference to your impression that the blacks are not to be got at on my run as stated in your letter, I can assure you that a white man encumbered with boots and clothes would have great difficulty in following them. Nevertheless, during the time that Mr. Compigne was in charge of this district he never failed to inspire the natives with a wholesome respect for their Majesty's colours whenever I had occasion to call upon him for assistance. Neither did Mr. Aubin nor Mr Seymour find the obstacles too great for themselves.

I can, moreover, assure you that since those gentlemen left this district no attempt whatever has been made on the part of any Native Mounted Police officer to intimidate the blacks on my run. And if you will think fit to enquire of Mr. Compigne you will find that I always kept a number of fresh steady horses on hand to remount every man in the patrol whenever they came, and otherwise give him all the help in my power.

And, in conclusion, I beg to say that had I known at the time I undertook to occupy the Peninsula with cattle, that I was expected to take proper care of them in the sense pointed out in your letter, I should have adopted quite a different method. In fact I should have commenced by clearing the country entirely of the blacks before taking the cattle up; but under the impression that I had no right to take the law into my own hands, and having at the same time a wholesome dread of the sympathisers with the poor blacks, I pursued the course which I took to be the legal one, and the result is that I have wasted nearly four years and lost about £2000. Edward H. Baker.²²⁶

The blacks maintained their usual pattern of violent behaviour along the Mackay coast and visited the neighbourhood of Scrubby Creek where they showed their natural propensity for pillage, by killing a bullock belonging to Mrs Delaney, residing at Mr. Kemmis' dairy. A horse, owned by Mr. McKenny, saddler, also fell victim to the spears and clubs of the Aborigines, who, besides slaughtering the two animals, ransacked a building belonging to Messrs. Williams and Morris, and stole therefrom a carbine, iron wedges, spades, and other articles. A party of men from Mackay started in pursuit of the blacks on the day following the robbery, but returned without having met

²²⁵ Northern Argus 3 March 1869 p 2.

²²⁶ Northern Argus 17 May 1869 p 2. See p 76 above.

with them. The cunning savages were seen in different places near thickets of scrub where the natives had taken shelter.²²⁷

Balnagowan station once again was subject to cattle spearing and killing by the blacks infesting the scrubs in the neighbourhood of the station. In fact, it was the fiftieth time the station had been attacked by Aborigines. On 22 September 1869, Mr. J. Cook, one of the proprietors of Balnagowan, travelled to Mackay to telegraph the Native Police, and informed them that a few hours previous he discovered two head of cattle, hacked in the usual savage manner and lying dead, during a ride over the run to see whether his enemies the myalls were about. The police had only a few days prior to this incident, patrolled the station. Because of the hostility of the blacks, Messrs. Cook and Ross tried to conciliate their blacks, but all attempts failed, and only the presence of the police or a watch being kept up at every cattle camp on the run seemed to have any effect in preventing the Aborigines from perpetrating more serious injury.²²⁸

The Port Denison paper reported the following:

Mr. Bode has over 100 Aborigines living in at Strathdon. That gentleman informs us that there has been living on his station for twelve months a gin, who has during that time acquired a knowledge of English, and acted as interpreter with the blacks when they came in. The blacks are reported as having said that, if they are allowed in, they "not kill any more cattle." Mr. Bode appears to have sent some black boys to Euri Creek to bring them in. They (the wild blacks) came in unarmed, having thrown away all their spears, stone tomahawks, and waddies, as a proof, we suppose, of good faith. Mr. Bode suggests that a subscription might be got up to supply them with tomahawks, which, as tomahawks are implements necessary to enable them to get their subsistence, we think a good and reasonable suggestion. A very few shillings would supply as many as would be required. Mr. Bode also thinks, and we quite agree with him, that the Government ought to assist, and to allow them a bullock a fortnight, which he believes would be better than flour, and would certainly not cost as much as a detachment of police. It seems to us that these blackfellows should have a blanket each allowed them yearly, as is done in Moreton Bay, and a few tomahawks amongst them. Mr. Bode has pointed out to them on what part of the run they can hunt, and they have promised not to hunt on any other part when the cattle are running there. He has also given them a fishing net, and they are about to go to the mouth of the Don to fish. We are asked to inform the settlers in that neighbourhood of the fact, and to request them not to interfere with the blackfellows in any way, as that would undo all that Mr. Bode has been, very wisely and prudently as it seems to us, endeavouring to do. In a month's time more are expected to come in. We sincerely hope that all settlers will scrupulously abstain from any such interference, and especially from giving them drink. The blackfellow difficulty has been a very serious one, and has done a great deal towards retarding the progress of the country. There seems now to be some hope of solving the question, and we congratulate Mr. Bode on the step he has taken in that direction, and hope that everyone will do his utmost to co-operate with him.²²⁹

Henry Reynolds in his book *The Other Side of the Frontier* made mention of this incident and says, "On some stations formal understandings were reached between squatters and neighbouring blacks."²³⁰ Well it is perhaps up to the reader to decide whether or not a formal binding agreement was reached between the Aborigines and Mr Bode over the entry and occupation of Strathdon by the local Aborigines. However, when it comes to the role and status of Aborigines in Australian colonial history as to their ability to meet a reasonable standard of diplomacy and conflict resolution with government and settlers, without arousing hostility, I have my doubts. Mr Reynolds

²²⁷ Queenslander 5 June 1869 p 9.

²²⁸ Brisbane Courier 28 September 1869 p 2.

²²⁹ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 23 March 1869 p 6.

²³⁰ Reynolds, 2006 p 173. See also p 150 above.

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has a weakness for grandiloquence and speaking in a perpetual hyperbole when it comes to describing tribal Aboriginal achievements in civil society relations.

On Thursday last Mr. Bode's black boy came into the head station and reported that the blacks camped in the vicinity of Strathdon had roasted and eaten one blackfellow and two gins. We do not know that he had any reason for telling a falsehood, so presume that what he said was correct; if so, the movement for allowing the aboriginals to have intercourse with their more civilised brethren does not appear to have had a beneficial result, but rather the reverse, for we never before heard of cannibalism so near, our doors. — *P. D. Times*. [The editor of the *P. D. Times* ought to know, by this time, that the 'cannibalism' in question is a portion of the funeral ceremonies observed by the aborigines, and has been practised by them from time immemorial throughout this portion of the continent — Ed. M.C]²³¹

Native Police as at 1868 — Blue Book of Queensland — 1869

Location	Rank	Name	Date apptd to Location
	Commissioner	David T Seymour	
Albert River & Norman River	Sub-Inspector Sergeant A Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	Thomas Coward One One Six Eight	1 April 1868
Belyando River	Sub-Inspector Constables Native Troopers	Maxwell Armstrong Three Six	21 December 1862
Blackall	A Sub-Inspector A Sergeant Constable Native Troopers	EJ Dumaresq One One Five	1 September 18688
Bloomsbury	Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	R Freudenthal Five	24 December 1862
Charleville	Inspector Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	TB Nutting One Two Two	21 November 1867
Cardwell	Inspector A Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector A Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	John Murray James H Scott AH Salmond One Two Nine	1 July 1864 24 July 1868 1 January 1869
Cunnamulla	A Sub-Inspector A Sergeants Constable Native Troopers	GDB Nowlan Two One Two	20 June 1868
Curriwillinghami	A Sergeant Constable Native Trooper	One One One	
Dalrymple	Inspector A Sub-Inspector Sergeant Native Troopers	John Marlow JM Thompson One Fourteen	1 January 1864 1 July 1866
Gympie (Nashville)	Inspector Sergeant A Sergeants Constables Native Trooper	Samuel J Lloyd One Two Ten Two	1 October 1868

²³¹ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 31 August 1869 p 2.

Queensland Native Police

Humpty Bong	Sergeant Native Trooper	One One	
Isaac River	Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	Edward Wheeler Seven	22 July 1864
Mackenzie River	Sub-Inspector A Sergeant Constable Native Troopers	RCH Uhr One One Two	1 July 1867
Maranoa	Sergeant Constable Native Troopers	One One Nine	
Paroo River	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector A Sergeant Constable Native Troopers	James M Gilmour Harvey Fitzgerald One One Nine	25 November 1865 14 November 1865
Somerset	Inspector Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	Frank L Jardine One Four Five	28 January 1868
Springsure	Chief Inspector Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	George PM Murray Henry Z Finch John McKay Dunne One Four Seven	1 October 1857 5 October 1869 7 February 1866
Suttor River & Conway	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	Fredk J Murray Charles N Sharp replaced by HJ Nicholson Six	2 March 1865 24 October 1865 1 October 1869
St George	Sergeant Constable Native Trooper	One One One	
St Lawrence & Marlborough	Inspector A Sub-Inspector Sergeant Constable Native Troopers	Fredk Wheeler Henry B Gough One One Seven	22 July 1864 1 July 1866
Yo Yo Creek	Sub-Inspector A Sub-Inspector Constable Native Trooper	Thomas Thornton Hugh Galbraith One Seven	1 October 1866 10 June 1869

In a supplement to the Government Gazette of 8 May 1869, the Colonial Secretary's Office on 12 May 1869 published Rules pursuant to the seventh section of the Police Act 1863 (27 Victoria, No. 11) for the Queensland Police Force. The Governor in approving the new Rules also cancelled all existing Rules for the general government and discipline of members of the Police Force. The following is but a brief outline of some of the Rules. It is to be noted that the Police Force of Queensland consisted of the following ranks: Commissioner, Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors who are classified as officers; and then sergeants and constables. There is no mention of the Native Police or native troopers other than at rule 104 which says the Commissioner has superintendence of the Native Police. Apart from those two highlights, the Rules cover all aspect of police conduct, procedure and discipline.²³²

²³² Gazette Vol. X, 12 May 1869 [No. 42].

Chapter Four — Ten Years On

1870

The decennial anniversary of Queensland came and went without so much as a bang or a whimper. The blacks remained recalcitrant in the north as ever. What became known as the Highfields murder raised an interesting point of comparison between black trackers and black troopers of the native police. Highfields is a small town thirteen miles from Toowoomba. On 12 February 1870, Michael Klein was shot at Highfields and was brought into Toowoomba. White police made a search for the suspect John Alexander Herrlich without success. So, it was decided to get black trackers. However, the trackers were afraid to continue the search unless they were closely followed by the police. Deep, precipitous gullies wound throughout the scrubs, presenting some of the wildest scenes that could possibly be imagined, forming an impenetrable barrier to the searchers. On the other hand, the murderer, Herrlich, had wandered through the scrubs for many years' past and consequently he was able to elude the police. Sub-Inspector Harris of the Native Police stated that if he could obtain one or two of the native police, they would enter upon the search without feelings of timidity and dread which had hitherto overcome the native trackers, and he would succeed in bringing the murderer to justice. Herrlich was eventually arrested, convicted of the manslaughter of Klien and sentenced to fifteen years hard labour.

By 1870, white settlement had moved north with the ferocity of a tidal bore; not all the amenities of civilisation immediately followed. In particular, the Court system remained languishing in the more settled centres of Bowen and Rockhampton. Even though the Native Police patrolled the north and kept the peace, every now and then they were required to attend court arising out of their work. With the sittings of the Supreme Court in Rockhampton and the District Court in Bowen commencing in the New Year, not a single native police officer was left in the northern district. Inspector John Murray and Sub-Inspector Salmond left Cardwell on the *Blackbird* for Rockhampton, in order to be present at a libel case to be tried there. Inspector Marlow, from Dalrymple, and Sub-Inspector Scott from Pelican Lake, arrived in Rockhampton en route for the Bowen District Court, where they were to assist in the prosecution of two persons charged with criminal offences. Mr. Marlow appeared against a man named Crosbie charged with stealing certain moneys the property of Ashby and Symonds, and Mr. Scott appeared against Peter Clarke, who was charged with cattle stealing. In consequence, the troopers in the northern division of the district were left to look after themselves. This was principally owing to the refusal of the Government to extend the District Court sittings to Townsville.²³³

All had been quiet on Magnetic Island, Townsville during the early months of 1870, until the blacks robbed the local Chinese fishermen who supplied Townsville with fish. The Chinese had made a good haul at the island and left it in charge of Fred, a Chinaman, while they went to recast the nets. Fred was busily engaged in covering the fish with branches to preserve them from the sun, when a blackfellow came upon him unawares, and planting a blow skilfully between his

²³³ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 14 April 1870 p 2.

eyes with a nullah nullah, knocked him senseless, and walked off with the fish. Fred was brought into town, where he was placed under the care of Dr. Callaghan, who described the injuries as of a serious character but not necessarily fatal.²³⁴

In early February 1870, information was brought into Gilberton that an attempt had been made to stick-up Francis' (Towns and Co) store at the Junction (Robertson River and Gilbert River), by Jack Moreland and Jack Sullivan, who also shot and killed Donald Simpson, a bullock driver. Inspector Clohesy, notwithstanding the almost impossibility of travelling in the flooded state of the country, accompanied only by a black boy, George, started for the scene of action. While searching for Moreland, George was bitten just above the ankle by a black snake. He took no notice of the bite until some three hours afterwards, when the part became inflamed and very painful. He then informed Clohesy of what had occurred, who immediately cut out the piece of flesh and administered copious doses of brandy. But the remedy failed and George died in great agony thirty-six hours afterwards.²³⁵

Mr. Sub-Inspector Thomas Coward left Townsville for his station on the Norman River. It took him four months to reach his station. He lost the whole of his horses during his journey, when about a hundred and fifty miles from the Norman, the horses were swept away while endeavouring to cross flooded rivers and creeks.²³⁶ A telegram from Inspector Coward was received as follows: "My barracks on the Norman River were flooded on the 1st of February 1870, and had eleven feet of water in them. I was compelled to abandon them in a boat, which is now lying in the bush. Two of my native police have been drowned, and the place is still flooded. I have not received a post from Brisbane since November, 1869."²³⁷ Mr Coward also lost a horse which was devoured by an alligator, while the brother to the same, was bitten on the thigh, but was fast recovering.²³⁸

On 21 April 1871, The Commissioner of Police presented his annual report for 1870 and perhaps the most interesting part of the report was the following, "In consequence of the injury done to the Telegraph line between Townsville and Cardwell, and on the range beyond Cardwell, it was necessary to form native police station at those places." The reasons for the attacks on the telegraph line are set out in the next paragraph.

The following was reported by the *Cleveland Bay Express* on 14 May 1870:

As a consequence of the withdrawal of the officers of police from their stations in the northern district several outrages occurred. Mr. Hamilton, of Hinchinbrook station, reported that during the past two months, the blacks had speared upwards of a hundred head of cattle, attempted to rush his dwelling house, and to murder his stockman and a black boy employed on the station. A fortnight ago the stockman was out on the run, about a mile distant from the head station, when he was met by some blacks who appeared to be very friendly. While he was engaged in talking to those who were in front of his horse, some of the treacherous scoundrels stole behind him and beat him about the arms and back with nullah nullahs. One murderous blow at his head failed to take fatal effect, although it grazed the top of his skull and knocked his hat over his eyes. Fortunately, he had not dismounted, and he was able to get away with his life. Three days afterwards the blackboy, Jemmy—a lad about fourteen years of age—was set upon by his countrymen while out on foot looking for horses; but having his revolver with him, and being perfectly acquainted with the country, he managed to get away unharmed. During the absence of Mr. Hamilton, Mrs. Hamilton and an infant were surrounded by some hundred and fifty blacks, who kept them at bay with a double-barrelled

²³⁴ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 14 April 1870 p 2.

²³⁵ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 14 April 1870 p 2.

²³⁶ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 17 May 1870 p 4.

²³⁷ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 19 May 1870 p 2.

²³⁸ Brisbane Courier 10 May 1870 p 4.

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carbine until assistance arrived. The same mob of blacks also played havoc with the telegraph posts and wire on the Cardwell line. It appears that their first idea in destroying the line was to prevent it from bearing tidings of their ill-doings to the Native Police camps. They were incautiously informed by the native troopers that it was intended for that purpose. Subsequently, however, they discovered that they can convert the wire into fishhooks, many of which, manufactured in a very ingenious way, have lately been found in their possession.²³⁹

Further reports were received regarding the destructive activities of the blacks to the Townsville/Cardwell telegraph line:

The blacks have been amusing themselves stripping the tops of posts of the hoop-iron binding for a distance, here and there through the scrub, of three miles, while several insulators have been removed by the same coloured gentlemen, as well as helping themselves to wire from a coil left on the track. The officer in charge of the new police camp is away just now with his troopers, having gone to shift Acting Sub-Inspector Crompton from McKinnon's to the Norman or the Gulf; hence it is that the darkies are playing these tricks on the telegraph line, and no doubt will continue to do so until taught better. They, however, do not give the working party any inconvenience, although their fires are seen and their yells often heard by the men in camp.

Speaking of the removal of the Native Police Camp from McKinnon's, I think I have already informed you that the site of said camp was an admirable one, being, as it were, in the centre of the squatting stations about the Lynd River, a locality just now overrun with blacks of the worst character. A squatting friend of mine, writing to me on the 17th instant from that quarter, says: "A gentleman has just left here for Brisbane, carrying with him a petition to the Commissioner of Police, praying for the non-removal of the Native Police Camp at McKinnon's, and we all here sincerely hope our wish will be granted. Respecting the Native Mounted Police Camp at Cashmere, I cannot see any other reason for a camp there otherwise than to protect the telegraph line. The police stationed at that remote place cannot be of any possible use to the squatters out here, as the nearest station to them is Glen Dhu, a distance of about 50 miles, while Cashmere is 100 miles, and more, from the next nearest station on the Lynd; from this you must perceive that the police at Cashmere cannot be of any use whatever to the squatters on the Lynd."²⁴⁰

Native Police as at 1869 — Blue Book of Queensland — 1870

Location	Rank	Name	Date of posting
Burketown & Norman	Sub-Inspector Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	John B Isley One Three Eight	23 June 1870
Barcoo River & Tambo	Sub-Inspector A/Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	AL Morisset One Three Four	25 May 1863
Blackall	Sub-Inspector Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	Edward Wheeler One Two Two	19 November 1864
Belyando River	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Henry Z Finch John Stuart One Five	5 October 1869 9 June 1869
Bloomsbury	Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	R Freudenthal Five	24 December 1862
Charleville	Inspector	John B Nutting	21 November 1867

²³⁹ Brisbane Courier 28 May 1870 p 6.

²⁴⁰ Brisbane Courier 20 February 1871 p 3.

Queensland Native Police

	Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	One Two Two	
Cunnamulla	A/Sub-Inspector A/Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	John McKay Dunne One Two Two	7 February 1866
Dalrymple	Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	John Marlow FM Thompson Fourteen	1 January 1864 1 July 1866
Gilberton	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Sergeant A/Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	Thomas Clohesy Denis McCarthy One One Eight Four	1 October 1868 1 March 1870
Gympie & Other Gold Fields	Inspector Sergeant A/ Sergeants Constables Native Troopers	Samuel John Lloyd One Two Ten Two	1 October 1868
Isaac River	A/Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	Henry J Nicholson Five	1 October 1869
Lynd River & Cardwell	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector A/Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	Thomas Coward RR Crompton One Two Eight	1 April 1868 1 April 1870
Mackenzie Crossing	A/Sergeant Native Troopers	One Two	
Maranoa	Sergeant Native Troopers	One Four	
Maryborough & Gold Escort	Sub-Inspector Sergeant A/Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	W Cooke Rogers One One Eight One	1 January 1868
Nebo	Sub-Inspector Constables Native Troopers	Maxwell Armstrong Two Four	24 December 1862
Paroo	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector A/Sergeant Constable Native Troopers	James M Gilmour Hugh Galbraith One One Eight	25 November 1865
Roma	Sergeant A/Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	One One Two One	
St George	A/Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	One Two One	
Springsure	Chief Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Sergeant	GPM Murray GDB Nowlan One	1 October 1857 20 June 1868

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	Constables Native Troopers	Five Six	
Surat	Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	One Two One	
Suttor River & Conway	Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	Fred J Murray Seven	2 March 1865
Waverley & St Lawrence	Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Sergeant Constable Native Troopers	Frederick Wheeler Henry B Gough One One Six	22 July 1864 1 July 1866
Yo Yo Creek	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Thomas Thornton Harvey Fitzgerald One Seven	1 October 1866 14 November 1865
Humpy Bong	Sergeant Native Troopers	One One	

In July, Billy Button, Granby, Jemmy, Billy and Ned Edwards were brought up at the Clermont Police Court charged with carrying away one double-barrelled gun the property of the Queensland Government. These were some of the Native Troopers that had bolted some time ago from the Belyando barracks. They had been for some time in custody and were eventually handed over to the police authorities. They returned to their duties, but were stationed in different parts of the colony.²⁴¹

The Peaks Downs Telegram, the Queensland Times and the Brisbane Courier had been running an editorial debate over the activities of the Native Police when the *Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser* of 8 November 1870 ended the above debate as follows:

One of our southern contemporaries has been lately attempting to revive agitation on the Native Police question. The text was some remarks of the *Peaks Downs Telegram*, pointing out that since the Native Police had ceased to be a retributive force, it was little else than useless. Our Peak Downs friend, with the natural boldness of an actual belligerent, treated the question rather roughly, and recommended a return to the effective system formerly in vogue, of making a shooting raid upon the blacks after each depredation. At this the editor of the *Queensland Times*, who is safely out of harm's way, is extremely shocked. He of course considers that white and black being equal in the eye of the law; we have no more right to shoot down our black brethren than our white neighbours. He is evidently of opinion that a blackfellow who breaks into a shepherd's hut and steals the poor fellow's food, should be apprehended by virtue of a warrant and dealt with at the next court of petty sessions, according to law. That is the arm-chair and velvet-pile theory of treatment which should be awarded to the poor blacks. But it is a theory which cannot be put into practice. A wild blackfellow steals and murders, but he is not to be caught, either in the act or subsequent to it.

It is all very well to say that the blacks are subjects of Her Majesty and are therefore entitled to the protection of British law. Practically, the aborigines are not British subjects. They are no more capable of legal restraint than the native dingo. They have not the intelligence to take the oath of allegiance, to become naturalised, or to make treaties. No way of treating them, except as belligerents when they commit outrages, has yet been found efficacious in the back tracks. They may be tolerated and treated kindly so long as they refrain from mischievous acts, but when they rob, steal, or murder, they must be treated as enemies to the state and shot down with as little compunction as soldiers shoot each other in battles among civilised men. That this is a deplorable necessity we admit. But is it more deplorable than the practice in modern civilised warfare? Our pioneers must be protected, even if it becomes necessary to exterminate the noble savage. Man was sent into the world to till the

²⁴¹ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 13 August 1870 p 2.

earth and subdue it. The Australian aborigines do neither, and we cannot believe that in taking forcible possession of the interior of this great continent the white settler is infringing any law, human or Divine. We do not advocate wholesale extermination of the blacks. On the contrary, we say treat them with all possible kindness. Still we maintain the necessity of prompt and severe punishment for every outrage, and of holding each tribe responsible for the good conduct of its individual members.²⁴²

During the late visit of the Governor to Cardwell, an inquiry was held before Captain Heath into certain charges of drunkenness and brawling against Mr. John Murray made by a lady. Mr. Murray subsequently resigned, after serving in the police force for many years, both in this colony and in New South Wales; and as a native police officer he was considered second to none.²⁴³ Mr. Acting Sub-inspector James H Scott of the Native Police Force also resigned. The reason assigned was that of urgent family matters, and he will leave by first opportunity for England. Mr. Scott served two years in Cardwell and earned the respect and esteem of all who knew him.²⁴⁴

On 21 November 1870, sub-inspector Coward and his troopers were accompanied by a Kanaka in the service of Mr. Allingham of Waterview, 21`named Luck-eye, who was taken to look after the horses. After the blacks were dispersed the troopers returned to the station. On the Kanaka being missed, the troopers reported that they had found him lying quite dead close to the spot where they had first missed him a short time before. He was speared through the body, and both his arms had been cut off. It being dusk the troopers returned to the station intending to go back in the morning and bury the remains. On returning they could not find the body; but in its place there were numerous tracks of blacks which were followed until the troopers came up with a mob of gins, who, on being questioned, stated that after the troopers had left on the previous night, the blacks had cut up the body of the unfortunate Kanaka, roasted it, and eaten it. This horrible act of cannibalism occurred within forty miles of Townsville.²⁴⁵

Mr. O. J. De Satge, member for Clermont, moved the adjournment of the House to bring under the notice of the Government that the outrages by the blacks in the North were becoming very frequent, and the native police force was totally inadequate to keep them in order. He had received a telegram from one of his constituents, stating that depredations were being committed on his station by the blacks and he might state that a similar outrage had taken place at Townsville, where a South Sea Islander was killed and eaten by the aboriginals. Within the last few days also a digger was murdered near Clermont by the blacks. He believed that the Government would have to increase the native police force by one-third, before the settlement of the country could proceed in the interior.

Mr. Palmer (Col Sec) said it would be better if hon. members would let him know when they intended to move the adjournment of the House for such purpose. He had no information at all upon the subject, but the Government were aware that depredations by the blacks were becoming more numerous. It was impossible that a country like ours could afford a native police force sufficient to do all the work that was asked of them. In those places which were badly provided with native police the inhabitants should defend themselves. He himself had that day received a telegram which had been sent to the Commissioner of Police from the chief officer at Cardwell, stating that a South Sea Islander had been murdered by the blacks, and, after being mutilated,

²⁴² Article abridged, page 2.

²⁴³ Brisbane Courier 17 October 1870 p 3. Deceased on 30 July 1876, at his residence, Kirtleton, near Cardwell, of diphtheria, Mr. John Murray, aged 49 years, leaving a wife and five children, Queenslander 26 August 1876 p 1.

²⁴⁴ Brisbane Courier 17 October 1870 p 3.

²⁴⁵ Brisbane Courier 13 December 1870 p 2.

eaten. He would have to depend on the liberality of the House to condone the additional expenditure he had made on the native police force.²⁴⁶

These libellous statements about the Aborigines being cannibals outraged Alfred Davidson, a well-known supporter of the Aborigines, who wrote the following letter to the editor: "... the published evidence on the death of the digger at Clermont shows the crime arose out of a drunken quarrel—that the deed was unpremeditated, and not the act of the tribe. A South Sea Islander has been killed. He ought not to have been there. By the tribal laws of coloured men, the penalty is often death for being found on the lands of another tribe. The entire subject requires impartial and careful attention."²⁴⁷



²⁴⁶ Abridged, Hansard LA 1 December 1870 p 155.

²⁴⁷ Brisbane Courier 3 December 1870 p 5.

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was the Chinese year of the Rooster. A small party of Chinamen who were going down country from the Gilbert were surrounded by a great mob of blacks, who relieved the Celestials of everything they had. The Chinese, terror-stricken at the appearance of the blacks, readily relinquished their possessions, thinking themselves fortunate in escaping with their lives. Governor Samuel Wensley Blackall was not so lucky; he died in office at Brisbane on 2 January 1871. George Augustus Constantine Phipps, 2nd Marquess of Normanby became Queensland's third Governor on 12 August 1871.

The *Northern Argus* of 21 December 1870 published a letter to the Editor from "The Suffering Bushman."²⁴⁸ The letter contained allegations of inappropriate conduct by Sub-Inspector Edward Wheeler against a blackboy in that Wheeler flogged the boy and presented a carbine at the boy's head. The Commissioner of Police wrote to Henry Browne, Chief Inspector, Roma Police Station directing him to comply with instructions contained in the Attorney-General's letter addressed to him of 20 January 1871. Browne conducted an inquiry which involved speaking to the blackboy, who was described as a civilised intelligent fellow. The blackboy when questioned replied, "No. He (Mr. W.) had caught him taking some rations, and had struck him, but not hurt him. He, moreover, said that no one had presented a carbine at his head, and laughed at the idea." "The Suffering Bushman" turned out to be the *nom de plume* of one, Cornish, a man of very bad character. Browne's conclusion was, "I do not consider that Mr. Wheeler exceeded his duty in any way, but on the contrary deserves much credit for the energetic manner he performed a very difficult task. Henry Browne, Chief Inspector." Edward Wheeler stated, "I have the honour totally to deny the circumstances stated to have happened at Blackall, stated in a letter which appeared in the *Northern Argus*, Rockhampton, on December 21, 1870. The man's name who wrote the letter is Harry Brabbin, alias H. Cornish. At foot is a list of convictions against Harry Brabbin, alias H. Cornish at Tambo:

May 10, 1867. Horse stealing—remanded to Taroom.

February 2, 1869. Drunk and disorderly fined.

February 2, 1869. Using obscene language fined.

May 19, 1870. Drunk and disorderly, using obscene language, assaulting the police in the execution of their duty—fined.

May 28, 1870. Ditto—fined.

November, 1865. Apprehended by Burke police for forgery; bail accepted—absconded."

Constable James Edwards, No. 66, of Roma police stated: "I was present at the camp during the time the blackfellow was a prisoner. He was not flogged, nor was a carbine or any sort of gun presented at him; Mr. Wheeler never used any threats or ill-used the blackfellow in any way to my knowledge, I believe the blackfellow stole some rations, and on Mr. Wheeler catching him in the act he struck him." The press reported that Acting Sub-Inspector Thompson to be Sub-Inspector in the Native Mounted Police vice Edward Wheeler dismissed.²⁴⁹

The Annual Police Report for 1871 was presented on 12 February 1872. The following are extracts relating to the Native Police:

The detachment of Native Police stationed at Nebo requires to be strengthened, as the aboriginals along the coast between Waverley Range and Port Denison are continually threatening the settlers and spearing cattle—the mountainous nature of the country, and the numerous islands along the

²⁴⁸ This edition of the paper appears to be unavailable or lost.

²⁴⁹ Brisbane Courier 18 February 1871 p 6 & 23 October 1871 p 2. E Wheeler dismissed 21/6/1871, QPG Vol. VIII 2/8/1871 No 8, p 70.

coast, offering a safe retreat to the marauders. The services of the police are in requisition almost daily. In the northern districts, owing to the opening out of new gold fields, it has been found necessary to augment the police force very considerably. New stations have been formed at Mount Hogan, the Etheridge, and Middle Camp, Ravenswood. It will also be necessary, shortly, to form a station at the Normanby diggings, on account of the daily increase to the population, and one also on the Broughton River.

Owing to the outrages committed by aborigines, the Native Mounted Police has been considerably increased in these districts. A detachment is stationed at Mount Emu Plains, which patrols the Flinders, Clarke, and Cape Rivers. A detachment is also stationed at Oak Park, for the protection of those journeying to and from the Gilbert and Etheridge gold fields. This detachment patrols north to the Etheridge telegraph station, where it is met by a detachment patrolling the Burke district. The detachment stationed at Cashmere protects the telegraph station to the eastward of the Etheridge as far as Cardwell.

In the Burke district, an additional detachment is formed to patrol the country from Normanton to the gold fields, and the protection of the telegraph stations. In this district, little crime has been reported; disturbances have occurred between European and Chinese miners, which originated with the Europeans. Disturbances of this character may reasonably be anticipated wherever alluvial gold is to be found. A force sufficient to prevent such chance riots could not possibly be kept up. The police can only do their best to suppress them as they occur, and to bring the ringleaders to justice.

Several murders by aborigines have occurred in this district, which have been, in some instances, of revenge on account of settlers carrying off gins and small boys to be made servants. The inspector of the district has endeavoured to check this, but without effect. Crime in the northern districts has been slight during the past year.



A BUSH ROAD.

Queensland Native Police

Native Police — Blue Book of Queensland — 1871

Location	Rank	Name	Date of posting
Burketown & Norman	Inspector	Aulaire S Morisset	1 February 1871
	A/Sub-Inspector	A H Salmond	1 June 1871
	Constables	Four	
	Native Troopers	Four	
Barcoo	A/Sub-Inspector	Henry J Nicholson	1 October 1869
Blackall	Inspector	Maxwell Armstrong	23 June 1871
	Sergeant	One	
	Constables	Three	
	Native Troopers	Six	
Belyando River	Sub-Inspector	Fred J Murray	2 March 1865
	A/Sub-Inspector	GDB Nowlan	20 June 1868
	Constable	One	
	Native Troopers	Eleven	
Cashmere	Sub-Inspector	Thomas Coward	1 April 1868
	Constable	One	
	Native Troopers	Eight	
Dalrymple	Inspector	John Marlow	1 January 1864
	A/Sub-Inspector	Ernest Carr	1 December 1871
	Constable	One	
	Native Troopers	Fourteen	
Gilberton	A/Sub-Inspector	Denis McCarthy	1 March 1870
	Constables	Five	
	Native Troopers	One	
Merri Merri Wah	Sub-Inspector	Harvey Fitzgerald	1 January 1871
	Constable	One	
	Native Troopers	Nine	
Maranoa	Constable	One	
	Native Troopers	Six	
Mount Emu Plains	Sub-Inspector	Henry Zouch Finch	5 October 1869
	Constables	One	
	Native Troopers	Six	
Nebo	Sub-Inspector	R Freudenthal	24 December 1862
	Constables	Two	
	Native Troopers	Eleven	
Ravenswood	Sub-Inspector	Thomas Clohesy	1 October 1868
	A/Sub-Inspector	Matthew Collopy	1 May 1871
	Sergeant	One	
	Constable	Ten	
	Native Troopers	Two	
Roma	Chief Inspector	Henry Browne	
	Snr Sergeant	One	
	Constables	Five	
	Native Troopers	One	
St George	Constables	Two	
	Native Troopers	One	
Springsure	Chief Inspector	GPM Murray	1 October 1857
	Snr Sergeant	One	
	Constables	Two	
	Native Troopers	Two	
Surat	Sergeant	One	
	Constables	Two	
	Native Troopers	One	
Waterview	Sub-Inspector	FM Thompson	19 October 1871
	A/Sub-Inspector	Richard R Crompton	1 April 1870
	Native Troopers	Seven	
Waverley	Inspector	Frederick Wheeler	22 July 1864
	Native Troopers	Nine	

The First Twenty Years

Yo Yo Creek	Sub-Inspector Sergeant Native Troopers	Thomas Thornton One Six	1 October 1866
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It had been generally known that since the economic crisis of 1866 much pastoral country in the unsettled districts of Queensland had been abandoned by its holders, but the exact extent of this falling off in holdings was unknown. On 19 April 1871, a Report of the Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands was presented to both Houses. In the year 1868, 114 runs were forfeited; in 1869, 462 were forfeited; and in 1870, 314 were forfeited making a total of 890 runs, containing an aggregate area of 41,758 square miles. The number and area of forfeited runs in each district were as follows:

District	Runs	Area in square miles
Darling Downs	33	900
Burnett	9	249
Mitchell	47	2631
Warrego	187	8340
Maranoa	99	3616
Leichhardt	216	7928
North Kennedy	56	3154
South Kennedy	81	5457
Burke	134	7666
Cook	28	1817

These forfeitures represented an annual loss to the revenue of £27,276 6s. 4d. The Chief Commissioner stated nothing of the causes that led to this wholesale abandonment of runs, but they may be attributed to over-speculation previous to 1866. All that was required at that time by any adventurer, perhaps utterly ignorant of stock-breeding and the business of a grazier was to mark out a good-sized tract of country. However, the abandoning of so many runs in the unsettled districts was principally caused by the false idea that prevailed until the middle of the year 1866, that the prosperity of Queensland rested upon its natural resources and that the soil and climate of this colony were so favourable for wool-growing that any inexperienced person could enter into the business with the certainty of success, notwithstanding that he was weighted with a heavy debt bearing usurious interest. This falling away of pastoral activities on the frontier perhaps may have led to less friction or collisions between the settlers and the Aborigines. However, with the discovery of gold, a whole new frontier was opened up, along which there developed a never-ending trail of skirmishes and killings which consumed the Native Police for a long period of their existence.²⁵⁰

The following appeared in the *Cleveland Bay Express*:

The detachment of native police which has been located here ever since Cardwell existed has lately been removed to Cashmere, in charge of Sub-Inspector Coward; and another camp of the same force at McKinnon's old station is also to be removed to the Gulf or the Flinders. The above alterations have given much cause of complaint. In the former instance the removal of the camp to Cashmere, 50 miles from town, it is presumed is for the protection of the telegraph line. The absence of native troopers near Cardwell leads us to believe that we may be visited by the blacks one of these fine days. While, in the latter case, withdrawing the members of the force from McKinnon's, while the squatters in that neighbourhood are daily losing cattle from the spears of the darkies, is

²⁵⁰ Brisbane Courier 19 April 1871 p 3 & 28 April 1871 p 2.

considered a very unwise step. I am informed the niggers on the Lower Herbert are still giving trouble, robbing any huts they chance to come across.²⁵¹

In consequence of a report made by Sub-Inspector Collopy, the Police Magistrate went to Tiaro, 27 kilometres south of Maryborough to hold an inquiry touching the death of an aboriginal there, shot by Constable McMullen in self-defence. It appeared from the evidence that on the evening of 5 July 1871, a black gin came to the police camp, her head bleeding profusely, and requested assistance. Constables McMullen and Pickering went out and found a lot of blacks mad drunk, assembled on a neighbouring ridge. The constables requested them to go quietly to the camp, when the blacks set upon them with nullah nullahs and stones, dividing the two policemen and placing their lives in jeopardy. Pickering being in great danger, and seeing McMullen in the same predicament, called out to McMullen, who had the only revolver, to fire, and he did so, and a blackfellow was shot and fell. The body was afterwards found with the head and legs severed from it, the head being scalped, the body flayed, and the flesh taken from the legs. A bullet wound was discovered on the left side, a few inches below the arm pit. The face being perfect, Mr. Cornwell was able to identify the body as that of Bungaree. The state of the deceased body was said to reflect aboriginal customs. Statements to the effect were made by several witnesses that the police were compelled in self-defence to use the revolver to protect themselves.²⁵²

The police force at Gilberton was strengthened by the arrival of acting Sub-Inspector Denis McCarthy and three or four men; Sergeant Laing, who had been stationed at Gilberton for several months, was transferred to the native police station at Conway. Mr McCarthy comes from the Gympie district, where he bore an excellent reputation. Sub-Inspector Thomas Clohesy, the officer in charge, was constantly on escort duty, so that Mr McCarthy will have charge of the police station.²⁵³ On Saturday evening, 8 June 1871, Gilberton was thrown into a state of excitement by the intelligence that John Corbett, formerly a storekeeper of the town, and up to the time of his death carrying on business at the Norman and Cloncurry, was brutally murdered on 31 May by the blacks near Cave Creek, about fifty-five miles from Gilberton, while on the road from Western Creek to Gilberton. He was conveying 352ozs. of gold to Gilberton, which was found untouched on his pack-horse. Immediately the murder became known at Western Creek, there was a general "roll up" and in a short time an expedition, consisting of some twenty or thirty horsemen, well-armed, was organised and started for the scene of the outrage; but, after scouring the bush for a couple of days without meeting with a single Aborigine, they returned without having accomplished anything. It was reported that Sub-Inspector McCarthy and his troopers had succeeded in killing seventeen of the wild blacks belonging to the mob that murdered Mr. Corbett; also, that Mr. Hardie was stuck up by them coming from the Norman, and had a narrow escape for his life.²⁵⁴

The threatening attitude of the blacks, who swarmed the fastnesses of the conglomerate ranges on the road between Gilberton and Western Creek, was of such a nature that teams dare not travel singly, or without being well armed. At a point close to Cave Creek, near where John Corbett the storekeeper was murdered, the road lies immediately at the foot of the conglomerate, where an immense perpendicular mass of rock stands. This was the favourite spot of the blacks for throwing spears at the passing teams, and frequently as many as 70 to 100 were counted scattered over the summit of the range at any one time, yabbering, gesticulating, and casting spears. Three teams, travelling singly, were recently annoyed in this way — those of Davidson, Carney, and Albert. In each case spears were thrown in considerable numbers. Although neither men nor animals were

²⁵¹ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 28 January 1871 p 2.

²⁵² Queenslander 8 July 1871 p 3.

²⁵³ Brisbane Courier 17 February 1871 p 3.

²⁵⁴ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 5 August 1871 p 4.

injured, there were several narrow escapes. Davidson was so closely pressed at one time that he had one of his 'leaders' saddled, ready to run for it if the blacks took it into their heads to charge down. Fortunately, however, the blacks never pressed their attack. Had they done so, they may have easily overpowered the teamsters. The neighbourhood of Cave Creek was considered a more suitable location for a small Native Police Station than some of those at present occupied, looking at the numbers and hostility of the blacks, and the amount of traffic on the road.²⁵⁵

When Mr. Aulaire S. Morisset, Police Magistrate of Normanton, was on the road to Cloncurry, and had reached within fifty miles of the diggings, his orderly, an aboriginal named Charley, ran away, and went to Mr. McIntyre's station Dalgionally. He remained there a fortnight, when he again started off; taking with him a blackboy of McIntyre's named Billy, who had been with McIntyre for several years. The two then commenced killing cattle on Dalgionally. Mr. McIntyre sent McLeod, and a couple of civilized aborigines, well-armed, to bring them in. McLeod's party soon found the runaways. On returning home, Billy and Charley managed to get possession of firearms and shot McLeod and one of his blackboys called Ned. The firing awoke the other aboriginal—Saxby—and he ran for it and reached home in an exhausted state. The two aboriginal murderers were well-equipped having horses, two double-barrelled guns, a revolver, and a good supply of ammunition. Mr. McIntyre, immediately after hearing Saxby's story, made the Cloncurry police acquainted with the murders. The police took some time in going out after the culprits.

Mr. Wentworth D'Arcy Uhr, who was formerly connected with the police in the Burke district, arrived at Mr McIntyre's, and volunteered his services in tracking the murderers. He accordingly went out in company with a black tracker, and followed their tracks for 100 miles, when he was compelled to return for provisions. Having recruited in this respect, and, finding the police still at their camp, he started on a second search. What he did this time has been made the subject of a magisterial investigation at Normanton. It appears that shortly after he left, he was followed by the police, who, on the 11th of August, came on a camp where there were evident signs of an affray, and near which they found the dead body of an aboriginal, with what appeared to be a bullet wound about an inch above the navel. This blackboy was supposed to be Billy. The police returned for a shovel to bury the body, but on coming back they were unable to find it, and believed it had been carried away. It is stated they never visited the spot where the dead bodies of McLeod and the blackboy, Ned, lay, and that McLeod would have remained unburied, but for his brother. At all events, the impression of the police was that the dead blackfellow they discovered had been shot by Mr. Uhr, and therefore they arrested him, and brought him to the Norman, where he was charged with the murder of the aboriginal Billy; but there being but one magistrate (Mr. Morisset), the hearing of the case was postponed until a second magistrate should be in attendance. The charge against Mr. Uhr was investigated by Messrs. Morisset and Hetzer, JPs which resulted in Mr. Uhr's acquittal.²⁵⁶

It appeared that Mr. George Sawtell, of Bohemia Downs, and four others were travelling with cattle, when near the junction of the Einasleigh and the Etheridge they were fiercely attacked in broad daylight by about fifty blacks, who threw showers of spears at the horsemen, and stood their ground manfully for a time. One of the spears took effect in one of the horses, and broke short off, but no other casualties occurred on the side of the whites.²⁵⁷

In the later part of 1870, two members of the Legislative Assembly had sought to use the adjournment debate rule to highlight the outrages committed by the blacks in the northern districts. In response to their calls for action against the blacks, Mr Palmer, Colonial Secretary, had

²⁵⁵ Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette 6 January 1872 p 3.

²⁵⁶ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 17 October 1871 p 2.

²⁵⁷ Queenslander 14 October 1871 p 8.

said, "Every week during the last five months his sheep stations had been robbed." Mr Palmer went on to say that the more populated areas of the north should protect themselves. The *Brisbane Courier* of 10 January 1871 ran the following piece:

Great complaints are being made by several of the Belyando squatters, who do not enjoy directly or indirectly the privilege of whispering in the Ministerial ear. It appears that ever since the appointment of the present Sub-Inspector of Native Police for that district, he has been kept constantly patrolling two or three runs, to the neglect of all the rest. Mr. Henry Finch, officer in charge of Belyando River police station is well known in the North as one of the most efficient officers in the service, and he gave perfect satisfaction in every district to which he was appointed, until he had the misfortune to receive charge, amongst others, of a station belonging to the Premier. Although Mr. Palmer said in the House that the squatters should protect themselves, he appears to take care that his run shall receive more than a fair share of protection from the police. It is generally thought here most ridiculous that just as an officer is beginning to know his district he should be removed elsewhere, it being impossible for him to act efficiently until he has had time to acquire knowledge of the country he is supposed to protect. The Native Police force of course becomes a farce if the movements of the officer are controlled by Brisbane instructions. The Belyando district is so large that no officer can patrol it all more frequently than three or four times a year, and those stations that receive attention oftener do so at the expense of their neighbours.²⁵⁸

About late January 1871, a large number of blacks collected at Albro station on the Belyando. They appeared friendly and were not molested by the men on the station. It seems the tribe then hatched a plan to kill all the whites and take over the station. Some of the tribal gins who were friendly with a station blackboy, whose assistance they required, tipped him off. He revealed the plot to his master and saved the station. The men took the initiative, and drove off the blacks before they had time to bring their plans to maturity. Shortly after Mr. Sub-Inspector Henry Finch arrived with his troopers, who devoted the short time they could spare to dispersing such parties of blacks as could be found anywhere near the station.²⁵⁹

Writing from Bowen Downs, Thompson River, on 29 September 1871, Mr. Alfred C. Thomas, communicated the following to Mr. S. B. Davis: "Your brother, Mr. H. C. Davis, who used to be here, left this station three or four months ago with two black-boys, to go across the desert to the Belyando. Some lately caught black-boys give some painful rumours about him, and the enclosed letter found in a blacks' camp rushed lately by Mr. Kerr, would appear to give some consistency to the reports. The letter is known to have been written by your brother to his mother, and he is supposed to have had it with him when he went away. The Native Police are coming up, and when we have more time a search will be made at the spot indicated by the black-boys some distance from here. The blacks have been very troublesome here lately, and a Chinese shepherd was killed last week at Jericho." Mr. Sydney David identified the letter as being in his brother's handwriting.

The *Peak Downs Telegram* contributed the following towards clearing up the mystery:

A report reached us a few weeks ago, that Mr. Herbert Davis, a brother of Mr. Sydney B. Davis, who for some time represented this constituency in Parliament, had been killed by the blacks. As it was only a report, which we were unable to substantiate, we called no attention to it at the time, but information has now come to hand that leaves no reasonable doubt as to its truth. Authentic intelligence has been received from Sub-Inspector Armstrong of Blackall, to the effect that Mr. Davis was for some time missing, and that it has now been discovered by the Native Police that he and his

²⁵⁸ Brisbane Courier 10 January 1871 p 3 & Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 14 January 1871 p 6. Palmer had pastoral runs in the Belyando River valley which he called Beaufort Station.

²⁵⁹ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 26 January 1871 p 2 & Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 18 February 1871 p 4.

The First Twenty Years

blackboy have been murdered by the blacks between that township and Bowen Downs. Everyone who knew Mr. Davis will regret to hear of his melancholy death"²⁶⁰

The *Peak Downs Telegram* also provided the following:

Mr. Sub-Inspector Fred. Murray is now at Bowen Downs, 150 miles distant from where another murder has been committed by the blacks. This time a young man named Mackay has fallen victim. His horse having been discovered with the saddle on running at large in the bush first excited uneasiness for his safety. A search was instituted, which resulted in his body being found frightfully mutilated. Nicholson (acting Sub-Inspector) has been constantly patrolling during the last month at Bowen Downs. He recovered Herbert Davis' horses in the range between Aramac (Rule and Lacy's) and Surbiton station. These horses have been recognised at Bowen Downs as those Mr. Davis had with him when he left Jericho, early in May last, for Clermont. The finding of the horses leaves no doubt of his melancholy fate. I fear Murray can affect little towards throwing further light on this painful subject, as lapse of time and the account the blacks give of having burnt the body will prevent his doing so.²⁶¹

Strength and Distribution of Native Police Force, 31 December 1871²⁶²

Location	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Sergeant	Constable	Native Troopers
Burketown & Norman	1	1		4	8
Barcoo River		1			6
Belyando		2		1	10
Bulloo		2			8
Cunnamulla	1	1		3	4
Comet & Nogoia		1			6
Curriwillinghi				2	1
Cashmere		1		1	8
Gympie	1		2	13	1
Gilberton		1		5	1
Merri Merri Wah		1		1	9
Maranoa				1	6
Mount Emu Plains		1		1	6
Marlborough (Waverley)	1			1	9
Nebo (Fort Cooper)		1		2	6
Oak Park		1			8
Ravenswood		2	1	10	2
Roma			1	5	1
St George			1	1	1
Springsure			1	3	2
Surat			1	2	1
Somerset			1	4	6
Waterview		2			7
Yo Y o Creek		1	1		6
Dalrymple	1	1		1	6

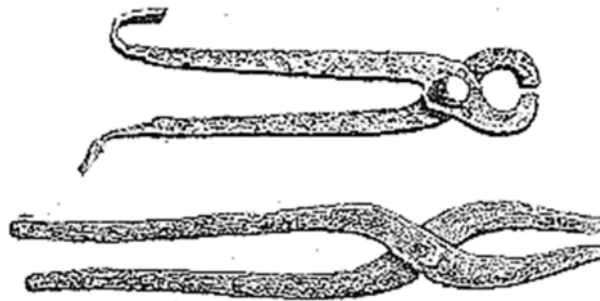
Sub-Inspector James M Gilmour of the Bulloo River Police Station was directed by the government at Brisbane to investigate substantial rumours of a white man, supposed to be one of Leichhardt's party, among the blacks. Gilmour and his party of Constable William Wright, five native troopers and twenty-four horses departed Bulloo on 16 January 1871. Mr. Gilmour

²⁶⁰ Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser 14 October 1871.

²⁶¹ Queenslander 16 December 1871 p 10.

²⁶² Annual Police Report 1871 dated 1872 p 3.

penetrated as far as Wantata, a place westward of the Barcoo, in about lat. 24 degrees and long. 140 degrees. There he found, near some sandhills, the remains of apparently four Europeans, with remnants of European clothing, &c. The natives told him that at this place four white men had been killed, and that "further on" three others had been killed long ago. Mr. Gilmour, who was unable to prosecute his search beyond Wantata, on account of floods, returned to Brisbane with his relics, but the assertion that they were the remains of Leichhardt's party was questioned, and the Queensland Government resolved to send Mr. Gilmour out again. He returned from his first expedition in March, 1871, and commenced his second search on 13 September 1871, starting from the police station at Bulloo Barracks, situated about 800 miles due west of Brisbane. Taking a different route to that adopted on the first occasion, he arrived again at Wantata, where he found a number of additional fragments of bones, and to all appearance the skull bones of European bodies. It was believed that the relics were those of Leichhardt and his party. There had not yet been time to thoroughly examine and classify them, but an attempt will be made to do so before they are taken to Brisbane, their ultimate destination.²⁶³



²⁶³ Rockhampton Bulletin 1 February 1872 p 3; Brisbane Courier 5 April 1871 p 2; Queenslander 16 December 1871 p 7.

1872

In January of 1872, Mr Palmer moved in the House additional police expenditure because of the rapid extension of Northern settlement. He said he wished to do a great deal more for the protection of the Northern settlers, and added that in a short time additional police for those districts would be absolutely necessary. The principal additions were 6 white constables and 20 native troopers.²⁶⁴ To give effect to this, Sub-Inspector Clohesy, who was sojourning at Maryborough on leave, collected a number of aboriginal natives as recruits for the native police force under Inspector Marlow, in the far North. Mr. Clohesy found some eight men, all new to the service, and rigged them out in the uniform of the troopers.²⁶⁵

In 1872, Arthur Hunter Palmer, grazier, with pastoral runs in the Belyando River valley which he called Beaufort Station, continued as the colony's Premier and Colonial Secretary. The northern districts of North and South Kennedy and the Burke and Cook districts remained troublesome. The blacks were looked upon as troublesome by the white settlers who took up runs in this vast wilderness while the white settlers were looked upon by the government as more troublesome than the blacks because they abandoned their runs, thus losing the government revenue. To add insult to injury, the whites then used the abandoned runs to graze their cattle on without paying any licence fees, a practice known as nuggeting.

On or about 30 January 1872, a horrible murder was committed by the blacks on Gould Island opposite to, and seven miles from Cardwell. The victims were two residents of Cardwell named Henry Smith and Charles Clements, fishermen. The natives, after brutally mutilating the bodies, left them on the beach stripped of everything, and decamped with the boat and net. An expedition was at once organized and started in pursuit of these wretches consisting of acting sub-inspector Robert Johnstone, J. F. Sellheim, Esq., J.P., and some other volunteers. Mr. Johnstone travelled about sixty miles from his station to Cardwell, notwithstanding the flooded state of the creeks in the neighbourhood. On arrival, Mr Johnstone and his two troopers immediately proceeded to the scene of the murder. After scouring the numerous islands in the bay as well as sailing round Hinchinbrook, an island thirty miles long and very mountainous, and visiting all likely spots on this last island, Mr. Johnstone and his party returned to town, having recovered the fishing net and two boxes known to have been in the boat when she was captured by the blacks. Mr. Acting Sub-Inspector Crompton who arrived at Cardwell two days before with seven native troopers, left here after Mr. Johnstone returned, intending to make a further search. Mr. Crompton from his cruise only had the fortune to pick up the rudder of the raiding boat.²⁶⁶

The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Police for 1872 was presented on 15 January 1873. The relevant items dealing with the Native Police are quoted as follows:

With reference to the Native Mounted Police, it has been found that recruiting within the colony is not desirable, as the troopers, when tired of service, under whatever conditions they may be serving, return to their tribes. On this account, it has been recommended that aboriginals be recruited from the Southern Colonies to serve a certain period, and then be returned to their country or tribe. For this purpose, a depot is formed to thoroughly drill recruits before telling them off to detachments. It is of vital importance that this branch of the force should be kept thoroughly efficient for the purpose of checking the aboriginals in their outrages, which, during the last year, have considerably increased as civilisation has advanced, and the country became occupied for pastoral, mining and other purposes. The aboriginal population has been estimated at 50,000; to check the outrages of these aborigines one hundred and fifty (150) native troopers are allowed, a

²⁶⁴ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 20 January 1872 p 5.

²⁶⁵ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 15 February 1872 p 2.

²⁶⁶ Rockhampton Bulletin 9 March 1872 p 2.

force scarcely adequate to cope with such numbers, but still their services have been such as to prevent great murders and bloodshed.

The biggest news event in Queensland of 1872 was the wreck of the brig *Maria* on Bramble Reef in the early hours of the morning of 26 February 1872 and its subsequent sinking with the crew having to abandon ship. The *Maria* was a charter ship crewed by a syndicate of 75 gold prospectors who were sailing direct to Redscar Bay, Gulf of Papua from Sydney to carry out gold prospecting. When the *Maria* struck Bramble Reef which is 41 kilometres due east of Lucinda, Queensland, 4850, the captain left the wreck in the best boat with a crew of six men. Twenty-eight left in two of the ship's boats, thirty left the ship on two rafts and ten were left on the ship as she went down. The two boats containing the twenty-eight men reached Cardwell on 3 March 1872. The captain's boat landed on the coast at Clump Point north of Dunk Island. Two men from the captain's boat made Cardwell on 5 March 1872. On the morning of 12 March 1872, HMS *Basilisk* rescued eight survivors from the wreck of the *Maria*, named Charles L Coyle, Edward Siddall, Thomas Ingham, Peter Haydon, MJ Forster, Robert Phillips, Thomas Smith, and John Bardon. They were humanely sheltered by the blacks, and they owed their lives to the kind treatment they received at their hands. Five others were washed off the raft and drowned in consequence of it turning over frequently. Another raft was found near the same place, which was about ninety miles north of Cardwell. Fourteen of the shipwrecked *Maria* crew were killed by the blacks. The view prevailing at the time which has remained constant even in modern times was that aid and assistance should be given to shipwrecked survivors and that they should not be killed. Arising out of the search and rescue of the *Maria* crew, search parties were attacked by myall blacks along the coast north of Cardwell to Point Cooper. Consequently, Sub-Inspector Robert Johnstone and his native troopers joined the search and rescue parties and as a consequence of attacks by hostile blacks along the coastal search area, a number of myall blacks were killed. The *Maria* survivors were repatriated back to Sydney aboard the *Governor Blackall*, on 28 March 1872, by Lieutenant John Gowlland.²⁶⁷

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Location	Rank	Name	Date of posting
Brisbane	Travelling Superintendent	Henry Browne	1 September 1872
Burketown & Norman	Inspector	Aulaire S Morisset	1 February 1871
	A/Sub-Inspector	A H Salmond	1 June 1871
	A Sub-Inspector	Ernest Carr	1 December 1871
	Constables	Three	
Barcoo	Native Troopers	Eight	
	A/Sub-Inspector	Henry J Nicholson	1 October 1869
Blackall	Native Troopers	Nine	
	Inspector	Maxwell Armstrong	23 June 1871
	Sergeant	One	
Belyando River	Constables	Three	
	Sub-Inspector	Fred J Murray	2 March 1865
	A/Sub-Inspector	GDB Nowlan	20 June 1868
	Constable	One	
Bowen Downs	Native Troopers	Seven	
	Sub-Inspector	J McKay	1 March 1872
	Constable	One	
	Native Troopers	Seven	

²⁶⁷ The reader is invited to read *Inside the Killing Fields Hornet Bank, Cullin-la-Ringo & The Maria Wreck*, by Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane, 2020. The consensus of the Black Armband Brigade is that the blacks in the vicinity of Tam O'Shanter point and Dunk Island were annihilated by the Native Police, which was not the case. These particulars blacks continued to thrive and to kill sailors on the coast for many years after the Maria incident, see pp 127, 169, 188, 189 and 196 below.

The First Twenty Years

Bulloo River	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	James Merry Gilmour James C Herbert Eight	25 November 1865 1 March 1872
Cashmere	A/Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Edward J Dumaresq One Six	
Cunnamulla	Inspector Constables Native Troopers	Thomas Thornton Four Three	1 August 1872
Comet & Nogoia	A/Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	John Stuart Henry J Nicholson Six	9 June 1869 1 October 1869
Dalrymple	Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	John Marlow Richard R Compton Ten	1 January 1864 1 December 1871
Etheridge	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Constables Native Troopers	FM Thompson George Dyas Eight Three	19 October 1871 1 March 1871
Gympie	Inspector Sergeants Constables Native Troopers	Samuel John Lloyd Two Fourteen One	1 October 1868
Gilberton	Constables Native Troopers	Three One	
Kirknie	Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Harvey Fitzgerald One Eleven	1 January 1871
Mitchell Downs	Constables Native Troopers	Two One	
Maranoa	A/Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	R M Moran One Six	15 July 1872
Mount Emu Plains	Sub-Inspector Constables Native Troopers	Henry Zouch Finch One Six	5 October 1869
Murray River	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Thomas Coward WEDM Armit One Nine	10 April 1868 5 June 1872
Marlborough	Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Fredk Wheeler Alex D Douglas One Nine	2 July 1864 9 June 1872
Nebo	Sub-Inspector A/Sub-Inspector Constables Native Troopers	R Freudenthal Hugh Galbraith Two Five	24 December 1862 10 June 1872
Oak Park	A/Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Henry B Gough One Seven	1 July 1866
Ravenswood	Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Thomas Clohesy Nine One	1 October 1868
Roma	Chief Inspector	Henry Browne	

Queensland Native Police

	Inspector Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	John Bligh Nutting One Seven Two	21 November 1867
St George	Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	One Two One	
Springsure	Chief Inspector Snr Sergeant Constables Native Troopers	GPM Murray One Five Two	1 October 1857
Surat	Constables Native Troopers	Two One	
Waterview	A/Sub-Inspector Constable Native Troopers	Richard Johnstone One Eight	26 September 1871
Yo Yo Creek	A/Sub-Inspector Native Troopers	Charles Nutting Six	1 August 1872

Mr Richard Bird Hall of Alice River, Townsville wrote to the *Queenslander* on 27 July 1872 alleging cruelty to the blacks, which was published on 10 August 1872:

But I cannot pass by without noticing one case that came under my notice a few weeks ago at Whyandot, a station belonging to Scott Brothers. Lambing was taking place, and the shepherd and one white man were out two days looking for the blacks; they found them, and brought them in. I remonstrated with them. The only answer I got was—this mob of seven are always allowed in, and they will help us lambing. In a week after Mr. Johnson came, and hunted them from the lambing. * Is this the sort of protection Mr. Palmer gives? If it is, I would recommend the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, when he again asserts anything, to make sure no one can contradict him, and prove his assertions unworthy of one holding so high a position. Yours, &c., Richard Bird Hall. Alice River, Townsville, July 27. P.S.—Since writing the above, I find the man who committed the outrage at the woolshed is appointed an Inspector in the Cardwell district. *Mr. Hall uses very strong language in describing the manner in which the blacks were treated at the woolshed, but to publish which would subject us to an action for libel.²⁶⁸

The *Brisbane Courier* of 14 August 1872 published the following:

The Acting-Commissioner of Police has favoured us with the following copy of a telegram received from Acting Sub-Inspector Robert Johnstone, who is stationed at Junction Creek: "August 5, 1872.—Blacks at Wyandotte, in great force, have burned 500 sheep." This is the run alluded to by Mr. Richard Bird Hall in his letter which we published last Saturday, and in which he stated that Mr. Johnstone "hunted" away seven blacks who were engaged in lambing.²⁶⁹ Then further:

Cashmere, August 13. Michael Bird Hall's statements are utterly false. I saw the man shepherding at Wyandotte; he was leaving because the blacks were showing up and spearing sheep. He requested the overseer to send for police protection. I patrolled Wyandotte on urgent requisition from Mr. Walter Scott, of the Valley of Lagoons. Michael Bird Hall did not see the police molest blacks in any way.²⁷⁰

Some 120 miles below Isis Downs, on the lower Barcoo River, a gentleman named Richard Welford took up a run there, called Walton, subsequently known as Welford Downs. He was universally respected by all who knew him for his manly and upright dealings. There was only

²⁶⁸ Page 2.

²⁶⁹ Page 2.

²⁷⁰ Brisbane Courier 15 August 1872 p 2.

himself and a stockman, named Hall, living on the station when the murder was committed. Messrs. Kame and Harris came to the station on or about 5 May 1872, and not finding any one at home, hobbled out their horses, and remained the night. Next morning, they went in search of the missing inhabitants of the house, and going some distance to where the deceased had been working, found traces of blood near a half-felled tree. On a closer examination it was found that Mr. Welford and Hall had been employed felling timber, when the blacks snuck up and killed both. Mr. Welford's body was dragged to a precipitous waterhole in the vicinity and thrown in. The body of Hall had not been found when Mr. Kame left. The Native Police, with several mounted gentlemen of the neighbourhood, went out in search of the murderers; the blacks took with them horses, saddles, firearms, and also ransacked the station of stores and valuables. It was not an uncommon thing for blacks to follow mobs of cattle and spear them as they went. In fact, they were observed travelling on the Thompson in vast numbers, carrying the spoils of slaughtered cattle quite openly, bullocks' tails.²⁷¹

Two miners, named Williams and Boon, went up the left-hand branch of the Percy River on horseback, to see if there was any gold to be obtained where Daniel Ryan was working. Dan was accustomed to come down every Sunday to the store, some twenty miles. He had not, however, put in an appearance for two weeks and those two miners were determined to see if he had left or not. On reaching his camp, the tent, which was all torn and dragged about as well as the neglected appearance of the place, indicated something was wrong. On further search, they found traces of blood spilt over the place and then discovered the body of the unfortunate man, with a broken spear sticking in it, penetrating from the breast to the backbone. The arms and legs had been separated from the trunk, and carried away either by the blacks or native dogs. One of the men remained that night, while the other came down with the shocking intelligence. News being sent into the Gilberton, Mr. Commissioner Harold St George, a sergeant of police, and a black tracker, came out and held an inquiry over the remains, which were reduced to the skull and bare bones. The black tracker carefully examined the place and it was supposed that the deceased was speared, probably from behind his tent. Mr. St George instructed Lieutenant Gough to proceed with the black troopers for the Conglomerate Range, which skirts the head of the Percy, Robinson and Copperfield Rivers. The blacks took with them the deceased's revolver, a saddle, and many other little things.²⁷² Acting Sub-Inspector Gough returned to his camp on the Copperfield. They pursued the darkies, taking from them several little things belonging to the murdered man, Daniel Ryan. They captured several score of spears, and as a matter of course burnt them. Acting Sub-Inspector McCarthy, with his four at command, on receiving news of the tragedy lost no time in following up the darkies, bringing back from the scene of murder a broken spear stained with blood.²⁷³

On August 13, Mr. Alexander Gordon brought intelligence to the Police Station at Marathon that Fredrick Maier had been found murdered at the Sixteen-mile Sheep Station, Aramac Creek. On the police arriving at the spot, they found the body of deceased lying in front of his hut. There was a frightful wound, about an inch and a half wide, on the back and partly on the right side of the head, apparently inflicted by an axe, when the deceased was lying on the ground. Another wound was discovered behind the right ear, apparently inflicted by some blunt instrument. An aboriginal native named Tambo, who was looking after lambs at the station, and was well known, having been for some years employed by different squatters on the Thompson River, is supposed to be the perpetrator of the deed, as he left the place on the same day, taking with him his gin and piccaninnies. A double-barrelled gun and some ammunition were taken from the hut, but nothing

²⁷¹ Northern Argus 18 May 1872 p 3; see also Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA) 21 January 1873 p 3.

²⁷² Brisbane Courier 29 August 1872 p 3.

²⁷³ Brisbane Courier 17 September 1872 p 3.

else. Sub-Inspector Dunne, Sergeant Hill, and some native troopers were on the track of the blackfellow.²⁷⁴

Four aboriginal troopers deserted from the party under the command of Sub-Inspector Nowlan, on the Belyando. Information was received by the police that the deserters were camped with other blackfellows in the Gracemere scrub. Mounted Constables Stretton and Devine were despatched on 21 September 1872 in pursuit of them, and, under the guidance of a darkie, entered the scrub. They were obliged to dismount, and, after walking about a quarter of a mile, came upon a camp of blacks. The whole camp took to their heels, and scampered into the scrub. Stretton and Devine having marked their men went in chase. Three of them got away, but the fourth fellow was captured, and brought into town. At a later hour of the day, Stretton heard that one of the three was in the neighbourhood of the Range, Rockhampton and, with a blackfellow, renewed the hunt. He was concealed for some time in a water closet, and thinking the coast clear, broke cover. Stretton speedily sighted him, and a warm chase across the flat ensued. The deserter made for one of the small scrubs, but was headed by the constable. The runaway made a stand at the rear of Mr. Melbourne's stables and showed fight, hurling a large piece of timber at Stretton's head. The latter dodged the missile and soon had the handcuffs on, and his prisoner conveyed to the lock-up. After Stretton had dismounted and was returning his revolver to its case, the weapon accidentally exploded, and the ball passed through the fleshy part of the leg of the blackfellow who was assisting him. The wound was fortunately not a serious one and the blackfellow appeared to think very little of it.²⁷⁵

One of a party of diggers returning from the North was taken so ill on Mistake Creek, near the deserted station known as Lanark that he was unable to come on. His mates, already short of provisions, could not remain with him, but giving him all the tea, sugar, etc. they had, pushed on for Clermont. On arrival, they reported the matter to the Police Magistrate, who at once ordered Mr. Sub-Inspector Fred Murray to proceed with a trooper to the relief of the sick man. In a few hours this active officer was on the road, and after a hard ride of nearly eighty miles, found the man he was in search of—much exhausted indeed, and very weak— but alive and safe. Being revived with brandy and provisions, he was soon able to start on the return journey, in company with Mr. Murray, and he arrived in Clermont on 8 May 1872.²⁷⁶

Strength and Distribution of Native Police Force, 31 December 1872²⁷⁷

Location	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Sergeant	Constable	Native Troopers
Burketown & Norman	1	2		3	8
Barcoo River		1			9
Belyando		2		1	7
Bowen Downs		1		1	7
Bulloo		2			8
Cunnamulla	1			4	3
Comet & Nogoia		2			6
Curriwillinghami				1	1
Cashmere		1		1	6
Dalrymple	1	1			10
Etheridge (George Town)		2		8	3
Gympie	1		2	14	1
Gilberton				3	1

²⁷⁴ Rockhampton Bulletin 28 September 1872 p 2.

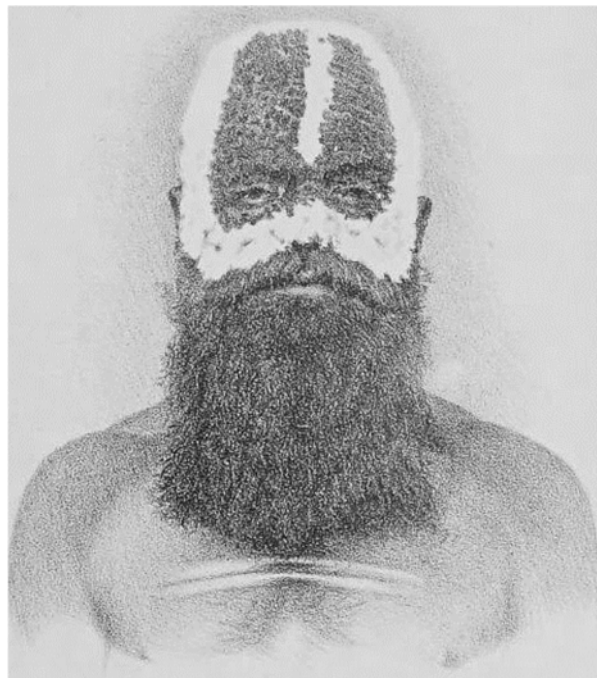
²⁷⁵ Rockhampton Bulletin 24 September 1872 p 2.

²⁷⁶ Rockhampton Bulletin 11 May 1872 p 2.

²⁷⁷ Annual Police Report 1872 dated 1873 p 3.

The First Twenty Years

Kirknie Creek		1		1	11
Mitchell Downs				2	1
Murray River		2		1	9
Maranoa		1		1	4
Mount Emu Plains		1		1	6
Marlborough (Waverley)	1	1		1	9
Nebo (Fort Cooper)		2		2	5
Oak Park		1		1	7
Ravenswood		1	1	9	1
Roma	1		1	5	2
St George			1	2	1
Surat				2	1
Somerset			1	4	6
Waterview		1		1	8
Yo Y o Creek		1			6



1873 During 1873, the blacks continued to be very troublesome in the Rockhampton area, and hardly a day passed without some story being brought in of camps rifled and tents gutted. Mr Hill of the firm of Hill and Dodgson, of New Zealand Gully, had every article of clothing belonging to him, including an expensive black dress suit, carried off. Acting Sub-Inspector Alexander Douglas of the native mounted police arrived at Rockhampton at 5 p.m. on 11 January 1873 with six troopers and started for Cawarral en route for Marlborough. On 21 January 1873, Mr A Douglas brought into town a notorious offender, Tommy Crammer, who was brought before the Police Magistrate but their being insufficient evidence was remanded for eight days.²⁷⁸

Mr Alexander Douglas then moved his native police south of Rockhampton into Calliope, Port Curtis district where he managed to disperse the blacks and help capture the notorious Spider.²⁷⁹ The locals were so thrilled with his efforts that they drafted the following letter of commendation for his good works:

Calliope,
February 11, 1873.

Mr. H. Browne, Superintendent of Native Police,

Previous to the visit of Acting Sub-Inspector Douglas, the tone of the aborigines had reached an intolerable pitch of audacity. Solitary travellers were attacked and robbed; stores and stations, and outlying huts, were burglariously entered and plundered; shepherds were maltreated; women were threatened with outrage, and it is feared that in some cases murder was committed. In short, when miners and others dreaded to leave their wives and children for an hour without male protection, it is not too much to assert that all confidence in public safety (in the district) was destroyed. The southern portion of the district was practically without protection, and there was a general outcry for the Native Police, whose presence it was hoped would intimidate the aborigines and restore confidence.

Since the capture by Sergeant Ware and troopers of the notorious 'Spider,' and the visit of Acting Sub-Inspector Douglas, who broke up the camps and dispersed the most dangerous offenders, no depredations or outrages have been committed. The demeanour of the aborigines has been changed for the better, and the undersigned are of opinion that so long as the district is regularly and frequently patrolled, the blacks will maintain their present good behaviour. We have, &c., [Here follow numerous signatures.]²⁸⁰

However, in the course of his operational activities against the Calliope blacks, Sub-Inspector Douglas' troop managed to kill a blackboy called Harry against whom a warrant was held for committing an outrage on a woman, the wife of a shepherd on one of Mr Bell's out stations some time ago. This fellow was shot when attempting to make his escape from Sub-Inspector Douglas. An enquiry was held at the Prospect Hotel, Calliope, on 17 February, before Mr Browne, Superintendent of Native Police, and C. W Rich, Esq., Police Magistrate, concerning the dispersal of the blacks. Several witnesses were examined, and their evidence went to prove that Harry was the man, and Mr Douglas was exonerated from the charge of wantonly destroying life.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Northern Argus 11 & 23 January 1873 p 2.

²⁷⁹ "The notorious aboriginal, 'Spider,' has been taken by Serjeant Ware (1876), and committed for trial. This rascal had some three years ago been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. He was in the native police on the Palmer, and did the state some service, but being brought into Rockhampton by Douglas, who left him to go to his old work for the last six months he has made things very lively for the police. The serjeant informs me that the blacks in this district will do anything for opium, even to murder," Maryborough Chronicle 11 November 1876 p 2.

²⁸⁰ Rockhampton Bulletin 24 February 1873 p 2.

²⁸¹ Brisbane Courier 1 March 1873 p 5.

The conduct of Mr Douglas and his troopers in shooting blacks while dispersing them from the district outraged the well-known Aboriginal sympathiser Alfred Davidson who wrote to the *Brisbane Courier* of 3 March 1873:

Your issue of to-day mentions an enquiry at Calliope by Captain Brown and Mr. Rich, P.M., respecting the death of a native; the extract alludes with revolting levity to the slaughter of several blacks by Sub-Inspector Douglas and party. One called Harry has been shot for trying to escape; he might be a criminal, but public attention must be steadily directed to the acts of the Native Police. We have in this case a flying unarmed man shot dead: is this in accordance with the spirit, or letter of the British law? Under such circumstances would a white prisoner have been thus killed? Such conduct towards the inhabitants of an invaded country would not be permitted by British officers.²⁸²

The *Northern Argus* having committed itself to the military efficiency and soldierly virtues of Mr A. Douglas and troop lambasted Davidson:

Mr. Davidson with a morbid sympathy characteristic of the Exeter Hall black protectors says, in his letter: "We have in this case a flying unarmed man shot dead; is this in accordance with the spirit or letter of the British law? Under such circumstances would a white prisoner have been thus killed?" Decidedly he would, surely the writer of such arrant nonsense must be very ignorant of the law, if he considers that a felon escaping from police does not render himself liable to be shot; ... The conduct of Sub-Inspector Douglas has been fully enquired into by competent authorities and we are in a position to judge, and they have fully exonerated that officer from all blame. We think it ill-becomes a man of Mr. Davidson's stamp to run down an officer who is known to be a thoroughly efficient one, and one who rigidly adheres to the "strict discipline" so much urged by the correspondent of the *Courier*.²⁸³

The *Maryborough Chronicle*, *Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* made the following observation on the above Douglas affair:

We understand that the result of the so-called 'inquiry,' which was held at Gladstone concerning the alleged unprovoked slaughter of a blackboy belonging to a neighbouring station by the native police, is not to be regarded by any means as final. The public have had no means of judging as to whether the inquiry was searching and impartial, or the reverse, save from the reports of writers who give no details of the evidence taken, but content themselves with endorsing the paeon of laudation which the Calliope diggers were induced to put up on behalf of the native police. There is a more than suspicion on the part of some well able to judge that the blackboy who was shot is a totally different person from the Harry, ... It is also a significant fact that the two shot-wounds found on his body were in front, (when) he was shot attempting to escape, ... The whole tenor of the affair, inquiry and all, is so eminently unsatisfactory, that we are not surprised to hear that it is likely to be proposed as a subject for inquiry by the Legislature during the coming session.²⁸⁴

The whole of the Broadsound detachment of Native Police belonging to Sub-Inspector Douglas' division, deserted on the night of 8 October 1873. Mr. Douglas went in search of them. Since the appointment of Mr. Douglas to the Broadsound district, there had been a marked change in the deportment of many of the coast tribes. The Peninsula, for instance, which the blacks rendered extremely dangerous for any white man to travel in, was now comparatively quiet, and more fat cattle had been taken off the runs this year than in any previous year. Before Mr. Douglas was stationed at Broadsound there were constant complaints from squatters of their cattle being destroyed by blacks,²⁸⁵ but since his appointment few, if any, had been made. Being as much at

²⁸² Page 3.

²⁸³ *Northern Argus* 15 March 1873 p 4, abridged.

²⁸⁴ Page 2.

²⁸⁵ The reader is referred back to pages 76, 93 & 94 above.

home on land as at sea, Mr. Douglas has followed the blacks when they have taken to their canoes, and as they know they cannot escape him; consequently, they have learnt to behave themselves.²⁸⁶ Mr Douglas' nemesis, Alfred Davidson, took heart in the native troopers voting with their feet by deserting Douglas and consequently wrote to the Editor of the *Telegraph* as follows:

... the facts are tolerably apparent; a whole troop of men do not desert without cause. Extreme severity has been employed by Sub-inspector Douglas, very unwisely, when his object, in part, at least, was, or ought to have been, the protection of the property of the residents; and yet he has pushed a guerrilla warfare to such a harassing extent as to defeat his own object, and to produce a violent reaction, by reprisals upon the entire neighbourhood the moment an opportunity presents itself. It is a known fact that numbers of our aborigines are working to our advantage and their own; that cattle can be entrusted to their care for many weeks in the absence of the proprietor, without the loss of a single animal; that cultivators and other residents are only too glad to avail themselves of the labour of our natives on their plantations, and when properly managed, they are found to do good service. Such constables as Sub-inspector Douglas are only injuring the colony ... A Native Police officer holds no legal authority to execute men without trial. Native troopers have much cause for complaint, when they are moved from one district to another. What care is taken of their wives? Have not their children been given away at times? Are they not often refused their discharge after their period of service has expired? I saw a year ago a dying trooper in hospital, who had had his ribs broken by the kicks of his officer. Are not acts of violence to the men often perpetrated by the constable in command? It must also be recollected that the troopers are in considerable danger from the retaliation of the natives they are led against, and must often feel afraid for their own sake, and glad to escape from the service in which they have no personal interest. The natives of Queensland are human beings like ourselves and our fellow subjects, and possess an equal claim on the protection of British law.²⁸⁷

The Editor of the *Northern Argus* on reading Mr Davidson's letter went into an indignant outrage and produced the following:

Black Twaddle. ... and that there was some cheaper and more creditable road to fame or notoriety than spurious nigger philanthropy, but it seems that there are still individuals who harp upon the one miserable string, twang the same wretched refrain about the aborigines "of Queensland being our fellow subjects, and possessing an equal claim on the protection of British law." So, because Mr. Sub-Inspector Douglas' troopers take it into their heads to bolt, that officer's severity has been the cause not that any reasons have been given for such an assertion. We deny that Mr. Douglas, and we are in a position to know, has pushed a guerrilla warfare to any harassing extent, neither has he produced "any violent reaction" from his conduct. The country which he has patrolled has never been so orderly and quiet for years, nor property so well protected. If Mr. Davidson fancies his method, if he has one, 'twould pay the Government to give him £1000 a year and disband the force. There is something very absurd in Mr. Davidson informing us that "numbers of aborigines are working to our advantage," that "cattle can be entrusted to them," and that we are "only too glad to avail ourselves of their labour;" that we have so little of it is only a proof of their myall habits. 99 out of every 100 would sooner spear cattle and brain the stockmen than work a minute. Mr. Davidson tells us that the troopers are in considerable danger "from the retaliation of the blacks they are led against them." Why, what does he expect them to be? Also, "what care is taken of their wives?" He certainly is lamentably ignorant of their habits and customs, and only makes himself ridiculous without doing any good. His query, "Have not their children been given away," is simply a little bit to bathos, which he intended for pathos thrown in as a make-weight. No such practice obtains amongst the blacks, but it does amongst the whites. We again suggest the Government appointing Mr. Davidson to try the humanizing dodge himself on some of our outside runs. We guarantee he would not draw a month's salary.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Northern Argus 16 October 1873 p 2.

²⁸⁷ Telegraph 22 October 1873 p 2.

²⁸⁸ Northern Argus 1 November 1873 p 2, abridged.

On 26 January 1873, the inhabitants of Bolsover Street, Rockhampton were greatly annoyed by a large crowd of blacks who congregated round the rear of the Police Office. The crowd was principally composed of gins, who kept up a continual howl like Celtic keening all day, as if they had met with some terrible calamity. The lament was found to be for the departure from their tribe of some blackfellows who were enlisted by Superintendent Brown, of the Native Police Force. A great number of volunteer aboriginals came into town on hearing that some recruits were required, and Mr. Brown managed to select nine men out of the lot as likely to prove serviceable. The elect seemed greatly pleased at their success, but the matter does not appear to have been so satisfactory to their gins and other relations. The next day, two additional blacks were admitted, making eleven recruits during the week. The selection was made out of a large number of aboriginals, who presented themselves as candidates.²⁸⁹

The depredations by the blacks continued getting bolder and more frequent, on or about 25 January 1873 a shepherd belonging to a station on the Kroombit, near Biloela reported to the officer in charge of the Native Police patrolling that district, that the blacks had robbed him of everything, even to his tent. Upon reaching the hut the police got upon the tracks of the marauders, which they followed for two days over almost inaccessible country, and on the afternoon of the second day came within sight of their camp, which was formed on the top of a scrubby mountain, which the troopers planned to reconnoitre. During the time they lay perdu, they could hear the darkies cutting out sugar bags and hunting within 50 yards of them, but owing to the denseness of the scrub in which they lay concealed, their propinquity was unsuspected. Upon surprising the camp and dispersing the blacks, the tent was found pitched, every peg in its place, and in the inside beds made up, opium and pipes laid round ready for use, and everything nicely arranged for an evening's enjoyment. The whole of the shepherd's things, with the exception of some of the flour, rice, tea, and sugar, were recovered.²⁹⁰

In response to a letter from "A Settler" who complained:

An acting-sub-inspector, who had already a large district to patrol on the Belyando, was ordered to "show himself" on the Mackenzie, and it has turned out, as was expected, a sort of "lick and a promise" affair, and the blacks, who are now becoming semi-civilised, are getting very cheeky, and defy the owners of the stations and the police into the bargain. ... but there is no earthly reason why some troopers should not be stationed at Bedford's Crossing, as there is already accommodation for them. It is amazing to hear some people talk of the "poor blacks" as being so badly treated, but if they knew the danger and nuisance that their white brethren in the bush have to contend with, they would alter their tone.²⁹¹

The Editor of the *Rockhampton Bulletin* in turn vented his opinions on the blacks:

The Mackenzie scrubs are a harbour for the blacks, and there being no police in the neighbourhood it is a place of refuge for all the sable villains in this part of the country. We quite agree with our correspondent that those who agitate for the disbandment of the Native Police know little of the circumstances of the country and the perils of bush life. At the same time, there can be no question that the native troopers are in some places so badly officered as to be a disgrace to civilisation. As already stated in these columns, there have within the last year or two been cases of "dispersion" in this district, the details of which make one's blood run cold. The reforms necessary, then, clearly are, firstly, such an increase in the force as will permit of a reduction of each district within reasonable limits; and secondly, greater care in the selection of officers than has generally been exercised. Some

²⁸⁹ Rockhampton Bulletin 27 January & 1 February 1873 p 2.

²⁹⁰ Northern Argus 28 January 1873 p 2.

²⁹¹ Rockhampton Bulletin 30 May 1873 p 3.

of our Native Police officers are humane, experienced, and trustworthy men, but others are, unfortunately, reckless and cowardly fellows, who delight in the pursuit and slaughter of unoffending and non-resisting blacks. Unfortunately, the blacks understand no less forcible argument than the musket ball, and therefore great discretionary power must be reposed in the native police officers.²⁹²

About early July 1873, bushrangers, Henry Faulkner alias Bamfield, William Lynn and John Campbell stuck up Malvern Hills, Brown's station, Barcoo, and then made tracks down the Bulloo. The Barcoo police having received information, started in pursuit and at Tintinchilla station (now Milo, Adavale) were only three hours behind. The bushrangers having camped the night at that place, left about six in the morning. The police arrived at nine, re-mounted, and followed their tracks, with a caution not to rush the bushrangers as they were splendidly mounted. They were also advised to follow quietly until the men camped, and there would be no difficulty in capturing them. Sub-Inspector John W Carroll, however, on coming up with them charged, and, through the boggy nature of the ground got within thirty or forty yards of them. One of the constables, Peter Nolan, exchanged shots with Bamfield, the latter firing several times at Nolan. Carroll said he could have shot one of the others easily, but did not like to do it. The bushrangers escaped. The Cunnamulla police started off at once. Sub-Inspector Carroll and his men got remounts and were also on their tracks. After getting clear of the police, they crossed over to the Cuttaburra, and stuck up Tinnenburra station (Tyson's), sixty miles from Cunnamulla and then crossed into NSW where they were caught and tried in that colony for robbery under arms and sentenced to hard labour on the roads. Sub-Inspector Carroll's action in preventing Constable Nolan from shooting Bamfield was criticised in the press.²⁹³

Great excitement was caused in Georgetown and district in early August 1873 when information was received that Mr. Harry Williams, a partner in the Caledonia crushing machine, and Samuel Blake (Sam, the Blacksmith), were murdered by the blacks, and two other men (James Rolls and John Kenley) severely wounded, within a mile of the Caledonia machine. It appears that large numbers of blacks were seen on One-tree Hill at the back of the Caledonia crushing machine; and that Williams, Sam the blacksmith, Rolls, Kenley, Stephen Dennis, William Wright, Samuel Morris, and two or three others, went out to speak with them. There was only one gun among the party. The gun was left behind a tree half a mile before they met the blacks. The blacks were distributed over the side of the hill, and when the party advanced, evinced both by signs and words every disposition to be friendly. "Budgery whitefellow, budgery blackfellow," one kept shouting, and came down the hill unarmed. "Budgery blackfellows" responded the whites by way of returning the compliment, and then a corroboree on a small scale was improvised by a few of the nearest blacks, and Kenley and party attempted something of the same sort. Williams took his shirt from inside his trousers to show he was unarmed, and went up to meet the blacks. Williams then took off his outer shirt and presented it to the spokesman, who graciously received it and put it on. After some time, the movements of the blacks who were on the mountain were causing considerable uneasiness to the whites further away. At first when told to drop their spears the blacks would do so instantly, but now their attitude was more defiant. They moved down towards the opening of the gorge as if manoeuvring to cut off the retreat of the whites. As the whites began to make for home, a spear or two was thrown, and about twenty-five blacks made a rush. Upon which the whites took to their heels. Showers of spears were thrown in every direction. Williams and Blake were struck down instantly. Rolls received a spear in the seat of honour, which he broke off as short as possible. Kenley got an ugly spear through the calf of his leg; another struck him in the neck, inflicting a dangerous wound. Stephen Dennis with great difficulty drew the spear from the wound. In the meantime, Billy Wright managed to get on a horse behind Rolls, and started for

²⁹² Rockhampton Bulletin 30 May 1873 p 2.

²⁹³ Brisbane Courier 13 August p 3 & 6 September 1873 p 5; Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser 25 October 1873 p 4.

the machine, but hardly turned the horse round when the blacks charged down on them, discharging spears as thick as hail, one of which pierced the horse in the hind quarter. After going a short distance, Wright managed to get a fresh mount, upon which he galloped to the place where he left the gun. He then, in company with Steve Dennis, returned in search of Williams, thinking that he was the only man missing. The blacks had disappeared, and after searching for some time they found poor Williams lying on his back with his head sadly battered, and his body completely riddled with spear wounds. He expired before they reached the crushing machine. It was only on arriving there that they discovered Sam was still away, upon which Steve Dennis, Jack Ayloff, Billy Wright, and Donald Brown immediately started back, this time armed with a gun and a revolver. They found the unfortunate man quite dead and naked, within a few yards of where the spears were first thrown. After scouring the neighbourhood for a short time, and seeing nothing further of the blacks, they returned with the dead body. A party of six blacks under Inspector Thomas Coward, of Oak Park, and another party of five under Sub-Inspector Alexander Salmond, of the Norman, made contact with the offending blacks and managed to get back the shirt which was given to one of the chief murderers, and the hat taken from poor Sam, the blacksmith, whom they stripped where he lay dead.²⁹⁴

Two very cruel murders were committed in the Charters Towers district; the first victim was a Chinaman, named Ah Bow, who started from Millchester on 13 November 1873 for the Seventy Mile, in company, with a pack-horse loaded with vegetables to dispose of at that place. His brother, uneasy at his lengthened absence, started, on 18 November, in search of him, and found his body near the road, about twelve miles from Millchester. Dr. Fotheringham made a post mortem examination of the body, and stated death to have been caused by a stab from a spear, knife, or sharp instrument. Sub-Inspector Matthew Collopy, with the police and black trackers, were engaged in searching for Ah Bow's companion, Sam Choy, but without success. He was supposed to have been murdered also, as some of his clothes and boots were found. Suspicion rests upon the blacks for having committed this outrage. Sub-Inspector Harvey Fitzgerald and his native troopers were sent for in the hope they would secure the guilty parties.

On 20 November 1873, on information received from the blacks, Mr. Commissioner Gill proceeded to a spot about half a mile from Millchester, where he found the body of his native orderly, Jacky Styles. Two blacks—a third escaped—were in custody on suspicion of the murder. Very little doubt exists as to their guilt, but, unfortunately, the necessary evidence was not obtained to ensure their conviction. Jacky Styles was an old and valued trooper in the native mounted police, in which he had served twenty-one years. He had accompanied Mr. Gill from the Etheridge, intending to go to Brisbane, where he would have become the recipient of a pension, to which his long and faithful services had entitled him.²⁹⁵

Telegram from Fitzroy Somerset, P.M., of Cleveland Bay, 19 April 1873 to the Colonial Secretary.

Daniel Kelly stated: I am a seaman; on 4 March 1873, I left Townsville in the *Goodwill* cutter, with William Rose and a man named William; we touched at the Palm Islands at 3 o'clock in the afternoon; I engaged the blacks to go with me; they took two gins with them; we arrived at Green Island about 3 o'clock p.m. on 8 March; on 12 April, the two men, William Rose and William, with three aboriginals, were spearing fish about twenty yards from the water; I was in the boat belonging to the *Goodwill*; I suddenly heard a groan at the place where the men were at work; I looked up, and saw William Rose walking towards the hut, with his head down, could see blood all over his head; Billy, one of the natives, was following him with a big axe in his hand; they both went into the hut; I saw

²⁹⁴ Brisbane Courier 6 October 1873 p 3.

²⁹⁵ Telegraph 13 December 1873 p 2.

the other man, William, up to his waist in the water, and a native, called Dicky, chopping him with a tomahawk; William disappeared under water; on looking at the hut again, I saw the black boy, Billy, come out of the hut; he was shouting, he had an axe in his hand; the three natives then made a rush for the boat I was in, with tomahawks in their hands; the two gins were on shore with a lot of spears in their hands, shouting, and running about the beach; the three natives dived and came up close to the boat; I pulled the boat ahead, and they swam after it; I then left the island, and went down about nine miles and a half to Philip Garland's station on the Oyster Quay Island; the natives we took from Palm Islands with us never showed any symptoms of discontent or treachery.²⁹⁶

On 9 May 1873, Sub-Inspector Johnstone and troopers returned from investigating the scene of the murder of the two fishermen on Green Island. Johnstone traced the missing boat, and at a natives' camp, at Point Cooper, found the charred remains of two blacks, supposed to be the murderers of the fishermen, who, in making their way home, were killed by another tribe. Near the remains were a quantity of clothing and some potatoes. The natives were numerous and hostile in that area.²⁹⁷ On 23 May 1873, the Governor promoted Acting Sub-Inspector Robert S. Johnstone to the rank of Sub-Inspector of Police, in the room of Henry Zouch Finch, resigned.²⁹⁸

An exploring expedition was fitted out by the Government to examine the coast between Cardwell and the Endeavour River, as a result of Sub-Inspector Robert Johnstone reporting, on his return from Green Island that he had passed some fine-looking rivers not marked on the map, and splendid country well suited for sugar planting. The expedition consisted of Sub-Inspectors Johnstone and Thompson, with a detachment of native troopers. Mr Walter Hill, curator of the Botanic Gardens, and Mr Bishop, naturalist and draftsman, were also part of the expedition, as the country was likely to prove a rich field for both the naturalist and botanist. Mr Walter Hill and Mr Bishop left Brisbane by the steamer for Cardwell, to join the ketch *Flying Fish* which was chartered for the exploration. Mr Hill intended, if practicable, to ascend Mount Bellenden Ker, in latitude 17 deg. 15 mins., said to be the highest mountain in Queensland, being 5158 feet above the sea level. The expedition was expected to last six weeks.²⁹⁹ Mr. Sub-Inspector Ferdinand Thompson addressed the following telegram to the Commissioner of Police, dated Cardwell, October 14:

The exploration of the Johnstone or Gladys River has been successful beyond our most sanguine expectations. The river branches four miles from the mouth, one branch leading from a southerly direction, and the other running from the north. The latter is the main stream of the river. The southern branch is navigable for vessels drawing 4ft. of water for six miles above the junction, and ten miles farther for boats. The northern branch is navigable for vessels drawing 12ft. of water for sixteen miles from the mouth of the river, and for boats for four miles farther. The land is all dense scrub, and contains hundreds of thousands of acres of what Mr. Walter Hill pronounces to be the richest sugar land in Queensland. From a hill on the southern branch the telescope failed to reach the outer limit of this immense tract of land.³⁰⁰

Another Massacre at Green Island, Three Men Killed by the Blacks

The Police Magistrate of Cleveland Bay, Fitzroy Somerset, Esq. held an inquiry on 28 and 29 July 1873 into the death of John Finlay, James Mercer, Charles Reeves, and "Towie," a Kanaka, who were killed by the natives while fishing for bêche-de-mer at Green Island:

Thomas Smellie, sworn, said: I am the owner of the ketch *Eliza*. I have a fishing station on Green Island; I was at the station on the evening of 10 July; I had Daniel Kelly, James Steele, William Smith,

²⁹⁶ Brisbane Courier 2 May 1873 p 3.

²⁹⁷ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 24 May 1873 p 2. See p 115 above.

²⁹⁸ Gazette Vol. XIV 24 May 1873 [No. 46] p 838.

²⁹⁹ Queenslander 30 August 1873 p 4.

³⁰⁰ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General advertiser 18 October 1873 p 3.

and Jno. Cardno, five black men, and two black boys, on the ship's articles, shipped from Cleveland Bay, and also three gins at my station; W. Smith and I were asleep in one of the humpies, when Dan Kelly came to the door about 1 or 2 a.m. in the morning of 11 July, and shouted out "Turn out, turn out"; I immediately jumped up, and came out of the hut; I saw Kelly and all our blackboys; the boys were crying, and saying that the boys at the other camp had killed the white men; Mercer and party had a fishing station on the other side of the island from mine; their party consisted of three white men, James Mercer, Charles Reeves, John Finley, and a Kanaka; they also had two black men, one blackboy, and a gin, aboriginals belonging to Cleveland Bay; my boys pointed to a boat in the water, and said that was the blackboys going away in Mercer's boat; I told my men to get out the whaleboat, and go after them; four of my men manned the boat, and pulled away after them; the whaleboat came back in three or four hours; they told me they had caught Mercer's boat, and it was blowing so hard they were obliged to anchor her on the reef, and that they would go for her in the morning; they said the blacks had taken to the water, and they would not be able to get to shore again; at daylight I sent the men round to Mercer's station; on their return they told me they had found all the men killed and that they had buried the bodies; the name of Mercer's boat is the *Florence Agnes*; I left her on the beach, opposite Mercer's station; I left Green Island for Cleveland Bay as soon as the weather permitted, and reported the occurrence on my arrival at Townsville, on the morning of 25 July; Mercer had been camped about a fortnight at Green Island; on 11 July we could not see anything of Mercer's boat.³⁰¹

To increase the efficiency of the native police the Government decided to furnish them with the Snider rifle,³⁰² which was found to be so effective in the late Franco-Prussian war. It was expected that prompt measures would be taken by the Government in supplying them to the native troopers.³⁰³

On 13 October 1873, the *Leichhardt* left for the Endeavour River, having been chartered by the Queensland Government for the conveyance of forty horses and a complete staff of Government officials, and a party of native police, for the formation of a settlement on the Endeavour River.³⁰⁴

The following message from Mr Macmillan, the Engineer of Roads, was sent to the Under-Secretary for Public Works on 3 November:

The party by the *Leichhardt* arrived here on the 25th instant [October], all well. Twenty-five miles of the route to the Palmer River have been explored and found to be good. The Main Range has yet to be examined. The site for the settlement has been chosen at the harbour, in an elevated position and with good water supply. The river is not navigable for sea-going vessels, but there is eighteen feet of water at Cook's landing. We start for the Palmer River to-day, followed by one hundred diggers.³⁰⁵

The *Telegraph* of 22 January 1874 published the following letter to the Editor:

Palmer River Diggings,
17th November, 1873.

My Dear Friend — We arrived here all well yesterday, after a journey of a fortnight; we made the distance 140 miles, but as no white man was ever over the country before, it took us time to find a level road; we found the road level nearly the whole way; we left the Endeavour River 30th October;

³⁰¹ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 30 August 1873 p 3. For a description of the *Leichhardt* at Endeavour River, ref. Brisbane Courier 29 November 1873 p 5.

³⁰² The British .577 Snider was a breech-loading rifle. The British Army adopted it in 1866 as a replacement for its 1853 Enfield muzzle-loading rifles and used it until 1874 when the Martini–Henry rifle began to supersede it. This rifle certainly increased the rate of fire or rounds per minute; a trained soldier could fire ten aimed rounds per minute.

³⁰³ Telegraph 21 October 1873 p 2.

³⁰⁴ Brisbane Courier 13 October 1873 p 2.

³⁰⁵ Queenslander 8 November 1873 p 10.

came 10 miles over broken granite country; camped at a creek, which we christened King Jerry Creek after one of the black boys; went out shooting kangaroos and birds; saw blacks. 31st October. — Went 15 miles, and were joined by the police, surveyors, and Commissioner; mustered about 110 souls and 34 horses; camped on Oakey Creek; went fishing and shooting; plenty of water; a tributary of the Johnston River, running S.E; camped next day; surveyor looking for a road over the range to the western waters; found it impassable. November 2.— Went up Oakey Creek, 15 miles N.W.; heavy travelling; my swag (55 lbs.); camped on a branch, christened Piggy Bean Creek, after the plant; vegetation scarce, except on the creeks; Leichhardt trees and bananas numerous. November 3. — Started over the spur of the range running to E; came to Normanby River (15 miles); started a mob of blacks; shot four and hunted them; fine river. November 4th. — Started, 15 miles; Surprise Lagoons, camped 5th for spell. November 6th. — Blacks surprised us at day-break, about 150, all were armed; got close to camp before any one heard them; great consternation; shot several; they ran into the water holes for shelter, where they were shot; travelled then unmolested for two or three days to Kennedy River; crossed the Lorenzo River; plenty of running water all the way; good country about Kennedy; course, N.W.; followed River Kennedy up course S., 15 miles; camped; had an encounter with the blacks; shot a lot; camped next day on head of Kennedy; came over ridges next day to Palmer, 12 miles below diggings; plenty of game and fish; camped one day, fishing; came to diggings on Friday; river, 200 yards wide; all slate bars; got colour of gold all along; all the gold is getting in the crevices of the rock; men working from here 45 miles up the river; gold fine, but good; tried prospects, but could not get anything; 600 men on ground, scattered up the river for 50 miles; some returning; no rations; there was a little came in yesterday, and sold at 2s. per lb. flour; 5s. bar soap; 2s. per lb. sugar; 4s. pot jam; 16s. per lb. tobacco; 40s. for second-hand pair of boots; 5s. per yard, calico; 12s. per lb. acid; 8s per lb. soda; 6s. per lb. bacon; beef, 9d. per lb., which is the only thing procurable. You could not get any flour or anything, but beef, for love or money; salt was not procurable for 20s. per lb.; men have to come down the river 40, 20, 30, 10, and 6 miles here to the butcher for beef; they cut it in small slices; and jerk it in the sun; no salt.

Some are living on one feed of beef a day for the last two weeks. Frightful rough road up the river. Travelling up the bed of the river. Two Germans are said to have got 125 ozs. in a fortnight 30 miles up the river. Now I think I have given you an account of the diggings. The police, surveyor, and thirty or forty diggers are going back to the Endeavour for rations with 150 horses. The Endeavour will be the port for here. They intend to make it in 90 or 100 miles going back, as it is only seven or eight weeks to the wet season, and all the gold is being got in the bed of the river; there will be starvation, as no one can work; as this is a large river, and the men are so scattered that, if the river rises, they will be cut off. Don't advise any one to come up here until after the wet season, unless they can get up to the Endeavour River with five or six horses in the steamer, and plenty of rations to pack 200 lbs. on each horse. This will be better after the wet season, as the country will then be prospected. Blacks bad; spearing horses. Keep my letters until you can get a chance of sending them via Endeavour. Advise anyone sending goods, or coming themselves, not to come via Townsville and Etheridge, but by the Endeavour. Give my respects to all friends, and my advice is, don't come till after the wet season. I am, &c.³⁰⁶

Sub-Inspector George Dyas dated Junction Creek, 21 November:

Payable gold has been found for forty miles up the Palmer River. A nugget of nine and a half ounces has been discovered, and several others of smaller size. A great quantity of gold has been found during the month. The diggers are content with their prospects, but many have to leave owing to the scarcity of provisions. A detachment of Native Police is required, for as the diggings extend the blacks become more troublesome. I patrolled up the river for a distance of eighty miles, and found the blacks very numerous.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ Page 3. This letter gave rise to the controversy known as Battle Camp; see, Kirkman, Noreen Suzanne (1984) *The Palmer goldfield, 1873-1883*. Honours thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland.

³⁰⁷ *Brisbane Courier* 24 November 1873 p 2.

The First Twenty Years

Distribution of Native Police State-wide for 1873-Pugh's Almanac

Location	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Sergeant/Constable	Troopers
Barcoo River		1 acting		9
Belyando River		1 + 1 acting	1 constable	6
Bulloo River		1 + 1 acting		7
Burketown & Norman River	AL Morisset	1 acting	1 snr, 2 constables	8
Bowen Downs		1	1 constable	7
Cashmere		1 acting	1 constable	6
Comet & Nogoa		2 acting		6
Cunnamulla	Thos. Thornton		1 snr, 3 constables	4
Curriwillinghami			1 snr	1
Dalrymple	J Marlow	1 acting		8
Gilbert Diggings			1 snr, 2 constables	1
Gympie	SJ Lloyd		2 sergeants, 2 snrs, 12 constables	2
Maranoa		1 acting	1	4
Merri Merri Wah or Kirknie Creek		1	1 constable	9
Mount Emu Plains		1 + 1 acting	1 constable	7
Murray River		1 + 1 acting	1 constable	8
Nebo, Fort Cooper		1 + 1 acting	2 constables	7
Oak Park		1 acting	1 constable	4
Ravenswood		1 + 1 acting	2 snrs, 8 constables	12
Roma	JB Nutting		1 sergeant, 4 constables	2
Somerset			4 water police	8
Springsure			1 snr sergeant, 4 constables	2
Surat			1 snr, 1 constable	1
Waterview		1 acting	1 constable	7
Yo Yo Creek		1	1 sergeant	7
Totals	5	9 + 15 acting	65	143

1874

On or about 26 November 1873, a week after the murderous raid made by the blacks on the Chinese camp at Gilberton, the blacks again made their appearance in great force close to Gilberton. But as good fortune would have it, Sub-Inspector Henry Finch with his black troopers arrived just in the nick of time, and without the loss of a moment "dispersed them". Gilberton had become no longer a place for white men to remain, without police protection, consequently the postmaster, storekeepers, publicans, and Chinese made preparations for a hurried departure. The drays obtainable were totally inadequate to convey any considerable proportion of the goods of the fugitives, and therefore an immense heap of valuable property was made a bonfire of in the main street. Mr. Ramsay, who had devoted the last two or three years to the cultivation of a large piece of land close to the town, and who had a promising crop of maize coming up, determined to remain and take his chance. He took over Pat Corbett's store, in which there was still a considerable quantity of goods. The few inhabitants at Mount Hogan saw there was no safety for them, surrounded as they were by crowds of hostile blacks seeking plunder and revenge; and they too determined to quit. Mr. Bernecker, the storekeeper and quartz-crusher, loaded what teams were available with goods which he despatched to the Etheridge. He then started himself, leaving in his store, one of the finest iron buildings in the North, a large quantity of goods, and a fifteen-stamper machine, nominally in charge of Mr. Bill Stevens, but in reality, to the mercy of the blacks. Mr. Bernecker estimated his loss at some thousands of pounds; and, with others who had been compelled to abandon their property through the absence of police protection.³⁰⁸

On or about 12 February 1874, a telegram to Georgetown from the Gilbert River telegraph station reported that the station was beleaguered by blacks in great numbers, and that the place had been barricaded. The station was built of sawn timber and roofed with shingles. It was garrisoned by a telegraph master, his wife and one assistant, with one musket and it was impossible for them to hold out long. Two black troopers, and two volunteers, in the charge of Sergeant Griffiths, left Georgetown for the scene of action, and the police were begging everywhere for the loan of firearms, without being able to obtain any of the right sort.³⁰⁹ The following telegram was received by the Superintendent of Electric Telegraphs:

The blacks are back again at the Gilbert River very close to the Telegraph station, challenging the officers to come out. The stationmaster reports that he has applied to Mr. Charters for aid of the native police, but has got the reply that he fears there are none in camp. He adds that it appears quite useless for him to apply for police.³¹⁰

The siege of the Gilbert River telegraph station was raised by a party of police and volunteers forwarded from Georgetown. No loss of European life was entailed. The blacks were dispersed by rifle in the usual manner, one of whom was found to measure seven feet in height.³¹¹

To the Editor of the *Brisbane Courier* from P. M. Corbett Brisbane, 22 June 1874.

Observations on a letter of D. T. Seymour, Commissioner of Police to Col Sec:

Brisbane, April 30, 1874.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

I have the honour to state relative to the question of police protection at Gilberton, that a fair share of police protection, both ordinary and native troopers, has always been afforded. Up

³⁰⁸ Brisbane Courier 20 February 1874 p 3.

³⁰⁹ Northern Argus 21 February 1874 Page 2

³¹⁰ Telegraph 27 February 1874 Page 2

³¹¹ Brisbane Courier 21 February 1874 p 4.

The First Twenty Years

to September, 1873, a detachment of native police was stationed at Oak Park, about twenty-five miles from Gilberton, and three ordinary constables and one native tracker in the township.

In 1872, some Chinamen were murdered by the blacks at the Percy, and there have been two other murders reported since, previous to the removal of the native police from Oak Park to Western Creek, on the road between Gilberton, and Georgetown.

In a wild unsettled country, it would not be possible for ten detachments of police to protect from the blacks, solitary travellers or persons out prospecting, who do not take ordinary precaution, and who frequently keep as a close secret the direction intended taking. At the time that the population left the Gilberton the last attack by the blacks on the Chinamen had not taken place, nor did population leave on account of the withdrawal of the police. The fact is quite the reverse. The police were removed from Gilberton in consequence of the departure of the inhabitants. In August, 1873, the travelling superintendent (Mr. Browne) was at Gilberton, and reported to me as follows: 'There is a very small population here, only one public-house, and I consider one constable would be quite sufficient,' and he also telegraphed me from Georgetown—'Gilberton is all but deserted, police are not required there. Three hundred people have left here for the Palmer.'

You will see by this that the sudden desertion of the Gilbert field was entirely owing to the Palmer rush and not to the absence of police, and a further proof that the inhabitants could have safely remained, if they chose, is afforded by the fact of Mr. Cameron, and the two or three others who remained on the field, never having been molested by the blacks since. (Sgnd) D. T. Seymour.

Mr. Seymour is correct in saying that there was a detachment of native police stationed at Oak Park, but he is not correct as regards the distance. He says twenty-five miles, but the distance is thirty-five miles from Gilberton, and ten miles makes a great difference in a mountainous country like Gilberton. Mr. Dalrymple had written to Mr. Seymour twelve months previous to the desertion of Gilberton, advising him to remove the troopers from Oak Park to Gilberton. Mr. Seymour says that in 1872 there were two Chinamen murdered on the Percy River. This is not correct, as no Chinamen have been murdered on the Percy. In 1872 there were six Chinamen murdered on the Gilbert River, from four to twelve miles below Gilberton township; and in the same year there was a man named Dan Ryan murdered on the Percy, twenty-five miles from Gilberton.

He further says that in a wild, unsettled district ten detachments of police could not protect travellers; but none of these men were travelling. My brother, John Corbett, was the only traveller that was murdered, and if there had been a police camp formed at that time, the murder would not have taken place, as the Conglomerate Cliff's, where it occurred, is the great haunt of the blacks. He further says, at the time the population left Gilberton, the last attack by the blacks, on the Chinamen had not taken place. This is also incorrect, as at that time there were 110 persons in the township, viz., on the 21st or 22nd November, 1873. The matter was at once reported to the Inspector of Police, Georgetown, and Mr. Gough, with troopers, arrived in about a week, and started after the murderers. The diggers then went to work again, as they expected Mr. Gough would follow up the natives; but in this they were mistaken, the blacks returning in eight or ten days, and but for the accidental arrival of Mr. Finch, who was out of his district, our lives would have been sacrificed. Mr. Finch being unable to remain, the people then cleared out. At the very time Mr. Browne reported, "There is a very small population, and only one public house," there were about 160 people in the district of Gilberton, but through the Palmer breaking out some fifty left. There were two public-houses—the Daintree Hotel and Ballarat Hotel, one wholesale wine and spirit store, a butcher's shop, &c. Finally, Mr. Seymour goes on to say that the sudden desertion of the Gilbert field was owing to the Palmer rush, as Mr. Cameron and some others stopped and were not molested. This is also, incorrect, as Mr. Cameron left after the second visit of the blacks. I was the last of the business people that remained, as it took me some time to pack up my goods; but Mr. Finch kindly stopped to protect me until I got away with my family.³¹²

On 18 June 1874 in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. William O. Hodgkinson, member for Burke presented a petition from P. M. Corbett, praying for compensation for losses sustained at

³¹² Brisbane Courier 23 June 1874 p 3.

Gilberton through the absence of police protection.³¹³ Mr. Hodgkinson moved that the petition be referred to a select committee consisting of: Messrs. Stephens, Buzacott, Macrossan, Lord, and the mover. The question was put and passed.³¹⁴ Mr. Hodgkinson then moved that the report of the select committee be now adopted and the sum of £300 be voted, as compensation for losses sustained by Mr. P. M. Corbett, of Gilberton. He added that the allegations of the petitioner were fully maintained; and that through the absence of police protection at Gilberton, Corbett was compelled to abandon his property, which was afterwards destroyed by the blacks. The question was put and lost on division: 10 ayes and 16 noes.³¹⁵

Reports from Georgetown indicated that the blacks had been playing their old pranks again, spearing horses and stripping the miners' camps of their blankets and provisions. The native police followed them and demanded the return of the stolen articles. The police also asked the blacks to retire to the other side of the river, as they were obnoxious to the diggers, and retarded the progress of the field. The Aborigines persisted in retaining about three hundredweight of beef, and asked for some salt, but the troopers had nothing but pepper, and obliged the darkies with a few canisters.³¹⁶

The following extracts from the Report of the Commissioner of Police for 1874 dated 28 February 1875 relate to the Native Police:

I propose moving the Native Police detachments out to the newly-settled country, and attaching, in the more thickly populated districts, a native tracker to each ordinary police station. This system does not, however, meet with the approval of the residents in many parts of the colony, who, having been accustomed to the presence of a detachment, are apprehensive of the consequence of their removal, and are unwilling to give the proposed system a trial. It is, however, in accordance with the opinion expressed by the Legislative Assembly, and I have not the least doubt will be found to answer well, if the change be made gradually, as it is intended to be. The applications for additional Native Police protection are incessant; and the opening up of the Cook and Palmer Districts, and the coast country from Cardwell to Cooktown has provided work for at least six additional detachments. All the police are now being served out with rifles and revolvers of same pattern, the Snider rifle being the one selected.

Distribution of Native Police as at 31 December 1874

District	Inspectors First & Second	Sub-Inspectors First & Second	Constable in Charge of Camp	Native Troopers
Brisbane	1			1
Wide Bay	1			1
Maranoa	1	1	2	12
Warrego	1	4	2	15
Rockhampton	1	3	4	25
Mitchell	1	3	1	16
Kennedy	1	6	2	64
Burke	1	4	3	27
Palmer	1	3	2	20

As was noted in the regulations made on 12 May 1869 pursuant to the seventh section of the Police Act 1863 (27 Victoria, No. 11) there were only three ranks of officers in the Queensland Police Force namely, Commissioner, Inspector and Sub-Inspector. Then in an attachment to the

³¹³ Brisbane Courier 19 June 1874 p 2.

³¹⁴ Brisbane Courier 26 June 1874 p 4.

³¹⁵ LA Hansard 14 July 1874 pp 971-978. The reader is encouraged to peruse the debate for background material on the practical realities of mining in remote and rugged country occupied by hostile Aborigines.

³¹⁶ Queenslander 20 June 1874 p 10.

Report of the Commissioner of Police for 1874 dated 28 February 1875, there was shown two new ranks for officers of police namely, Inspectors first and second class and Sub-Inspectors first and second class. No comment or explanation for the new ranks was offered in the above Commissioner's report and there appears to have been no regulations promulgated pursuant to the Police Act regarding the new sub-ranks of Inspector and Sub-Inspector.

The following is an account of the Palmer, obtained just before the *Boomerang* left, furnished by Mr. Nightingale, 26 January 1874:

The river bed cannot be worked till the end of May. A mob of blacks is reported to have surprised a camp of diggers on the road to the Palmer, and that several men have been speared and four killed; but these reports are constantly being brought in, and the general impression here is that the blacks are "not so black as they are painted," although it would be folly to proceed inland unarmed. The native troopers have been sent out to enquire into the matter. There are no blacks at Cooktown, and Mr. Morisset did not meet one on his downward journey. It is estimated that there are now at and on the road to the Palmer 3,000 people. So soon as ships arrive at the port, miners proceed with their horses and packs two or three miles out of town, and camp a day or so to recover their 'shore-legs,' and then proceed on their way to the gold country. To Sub-Inspector Douglas of the Native Police is due the credit of having shortened the road to the diggings. Mr. Douglas left the Palmer on the 12th January, 30 miles above the Commissioner's Camp, and from the start he struck a shorter track. It rained heavily the whole journey down, and a broad marked tree line was made by the black troopers from the Upper Palmer Diggings to the junction of McMillan's Road, and thereby saving a distance of 70 miles; and Mr. Douglas thinks another 26 miles can be saved so soon as the weather clears. The new road could be made practicable for drays from where it joined McMillan's Road, about 14 miles on the other side of the Normanby River, with comparatively little expense, by a road party. Mr. Douglas directed upwards of 200 miners on to the new track, which all fresh arrivals will follow. The distance from Cooktown to the Upper Palmer Diggings is now only 119 miles. As an illustration of the scarcity of provisions and game, Mr. Douglas and his black troopers had only a mountain wallaby and two squatter pigeons to subsist on for three days. He reports everyone getting good gold, and the want of rations the only drawback. The appearance of the country for miles on the Endeavour side of the Palmer Range is auriferous, and for six miles heavy quartz outcrops, running into and across creeks, and intersected with slate bars. Business at Cooktown is almost at a standstill. Stocks are, comparatively speaking, heavy, and goods selling at only a small advance on Brisbane prices.³¹⁷

The blacks were very daring along the road between Cooktown and the Palmer, and it required all the energy of Acting Sub-Inspector Douglas and his troopers to keep the road safe. This officer proved himself one of the best in the force, for his daring behaviour in dispersing large camps of hostile blacks, who in the most barefaced manner had attacked travelling whites, although in large parties. The blacks left an indelible mark on Mr. Douglas by thrusting one of their poisoned spears through the sleeve of his serge jacket close to his left breast, had it entered his flesh he would have lost his life. All the diggers were loud in their praise of Mr Douglas, and a memorial was a foot for presentation to the Government, asking them to promote Mr. Douglas for the good he had done.³¹⁸

Commissioner of Police (Mr. D. T. Seymour), to Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, 24 February 1874.

I have the honour to report my return this day from Cooktown, where I arrived on the 11th instant (February). According to the computation of the Customs officer, and others who had the best

³¹⁷ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 10 February 1874 p 2; Brisbane Courier 5 February 1874 p 2.

³¹⁸ Northern Argus 17 February 1874 p 2.

means of judging, there were then at Cooktown about fifteen hundred persons. The day after I got there two steamers and two sailing vessels arrived, and on the following day another steamer and two more sailing-vessels, all crowded. The township though crowded, was very quiet, provisions were plentiful, and prices reasonable, with the exception of fresh meat, which was scarce, and fetched from 9d. to 1s. per lb. It was reported that there were from five hundred to one thousand persons on the road to the Palmer, who being caught between the rivers, were unable to get either to the diggings or back, and that their stock of provisions had run out — some were stated to be living on horse flesh, but this latter report was not well authenticated; it is not, however, at all unlikely to have been correct. Pack-horses were unable to get along the road, and the quantity that men could carry would not suffice for more than their own wants. A party of men had started for the Normanby, carrying planks to make a punt for crossing that river; but when I left Cooktown, they had only got ten miles on the road, and they were then three days travelling.

Provisions on the Palmer, according to the best information, are completely exhausted, and unless some aid reaches that place soon, starvation must ensue. Although everything is at present quiet and orderly at Cooktown, this state of things is not likely to last if miners crowd in there at the rate they are now arriving and are unable to push on. Many have no more money than they calculated would last them for the trip, without stoppage on the way, and when they have expended all this at the port, and find themselves without means to continue their journey, I am apprehensive that disturbances will arise. Seeing no probability of getting up by the present road for some time, and knowing that you were anxious that all possible assistance should be given both to the miners on the field and on the way thereto, I consulted with the Police Magistrate, Mr. Hamilton, and we considered it advisable, as I already informed you by telegram, to start a party of Native Police (who were on the spot, and, in consequence of the boggy state of the country, unable to do any duty) to the Daintree River, to try and make their way thence to the Palmer, heading those rivers that now block the road from Cooktown. It was arranged at the same time that Inspector Morisset should proceed from the Endeavour to the Palmer, also trying to head the rivers, in a line to the southward of McMillan's track. I selected the Daintree on account of the description of the range at that spot given to me by Mr. Dalrymple. The expense of this trip costs nothing beyond the amount paid to the steamer for taking the party to the Daintree and back; the steamer does not wait for the party, but calls each time she passes on her trip up and down from Cardwell.

I trust that my action in this matter will meet with the approval of the Government; there being no time to communicate with you I had to act upon my own responsibility. Cooktown consists of one long irregular street, stretching from the Government reserve along the bank of the river for about half a mile, one side only being built upon. The side next the river is reserved, although upon it, as well as on the reserve for public buildings, tents are pitched as thick as it is possible to place them; these will, however, all vanish when the road is passable. The wharfage is all on the Government reserve, and is in a very bad state, nothing having been done to improve it beyond the partial clearing of the mangroves by private persons here and there. The most pressing necessity existing there at present is for a bonded store and a good wharf. Several persons are, I believe, about to apply for permission to erect wharves; but as the channel in the river is narrow, and the available frontage limited, it will be better not to allow the erection of wharves except under the supervision of some experienced officer.

The Government buildings consist of a large iron and a small wooden house for the police, and a small hut for Customs purposes. The Court is held in one of the police rooms, and the Post Office is in another. The Acting Sub-Inspector discharges at present the duties of postmaster, but I fear he will be unable to do so very much longer, as if the rush continues, his own proper duty will take up all his time. There were 420 letters received, and 795 despatched, by the *Alexandra* and *Boomerang*.

The strength of the police force is as follows:

1 Acting Sub-Inspector, 1 sergeant, 1 senior constable, and 14 constables. There is also a detachment of native police, at present on temporary duty at the Daintree. This is ample for present work, but having in view the probability of a large rush to the port, and the necessity for making immediate preparation for a gold escort from the Palmer, and the formation of out-stations on the diggings, which now extend to a distance of over thirty miles from the Commissioner's camp, several additional men will be required at once.³¹⁹

³¹⁹ Telegraph 27 February 1874 p 3.

The following official telegrams regarding the Palmer were received by the Commissioner of Police on 26 February 1874:

Cardwell, February 24. I have just returned from the Daintree in the *Annie* steamer. There is no possibility of getting a road from the Daintree to the Palmer. We went up the river for a distance of twenty miles in the steamer, and found the country all dense scrub, while towards the head of the river are steep scrubby ridges, which are backed up by a mountain range stretching from north-west to south, from three to four thousand feet high, and covered with dense scrub. Fully thirty miles of scrub would have to be cut through to get over this mountain. I landed the party at the mouth of the Bloomfield, in Weary Bay, where the prospect of obtaining a road is far more cheering and the line more direct, no great obstacles existing as far as I could observe from the summit of a range at this point. Dumaresq is sanguine of success in the matter. I left the party all well, and the weather fine. F. A. Thompson.

Cooktown, February 24. I will start as soon as possible to try for a new road to the Palmer. The arrivals from the diggings are numerous, and report that numbers of men are dying from starvation and exhaustion along the road. One person on whom I can rely, states that he with others was reduced to the necessity of eating horses two days dead. Matters on the diggings are little better. All work and communication with Palmerston is stopped by the floods. The last of the flour on the diggings is selling at three shillings and six pence per pint, and there is no meat in any form. The weather has been moderately fine here lately. I hope to reach Georgetown in three weeks. A. Morisset, Inspector.³²⁰

The conditions on the new Palmer diggings appeared to suggest that diggers were having a hard time of it. Little intelligence had been received in Brisbane concerning the plight of the population who had rushed the place and then found themselves trapped by the monsoonal wet season for that time of the years. A Dr. Hamilton, late of Gympie, who had gone to the Palmer, sent a telegram from Cardwell, dated 3 March 1874, "Returned from Palmer for rations, having given half to men starving on the road."³²¹ What the Brisbane press were arguing for at the time was the relief of the Palmer. Since the following three gentlemen were in Brisbane, all explorers of reputation, Messrs. Landsborough, J. G. Macdonald, and Dalrymple, either of whom would be eminently suited to take command of a relief caravan with provisions, say from the Etheridge to the Palmer, it was suggested that idea should be recommended to the Government.³²²

Mr. Howard St. George, Gold Commissioner at the Palmer River, forwarded on 22 February 1874, the following memoranda, "the blacks were very bad on the road and two men were killed and three wounded. Sub-Inspector Dumaresq was on the road to the Endeavour, looking after men who had difficulties with the blacks. It was highly dangerous for men, especially on foot, to travel this country, except armed with carbines or a gun, and in parties of at least six."³²³ Henry Browne, Superintendent advised per telegram dated 21 April from Cardwell, "just arrived from the Endeavour River, left everything quiet and orderly. Country flooded; Clohesy very unwell; doctor says he will have to go south for a change. Douglas arrived; his horses completely done up. I purchased five horses for Douglas, who returns as soon as possible to travel."

Because of Alexander Douglas's popularity on the Palmer goldfield he had become a news item himself and was thus portrayed in the following light: "He is the officer in command of the native police, the explorer of the country for the purpose of guiding the miner through the most accessible route to the diggings, the protector of the miner on the way, and the terror of the blacks.

³²⁰ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 28 February 1874 p 4.

³²¹ Brisbane Courier 5 March 1874 p 2.

³²² Brisbane Courier 5 March 1874 p 2.

³²³ Brisbane Courier 17 March 1874 p 3.

The physical appearance of this officer is slim and wiry, standing about five feet seven inches, and looking not a year older than three and twenty. Yet he has been known to shoot down the blacks by dozens in a skirmish with them, thereby clearing the road of these murdering savages, and ensuring the safety of the traveller.³²⁴

Visiting Cooktown and district on an official inspection was Mr. Inspector Lewis, who was to make an inspection of the police-station and to assess the need for police protection on the diggings. With him were four constables together with Sub-Inspector Coward, and three native troopers.³²⁵

On or about early October 1874, Sub-Inspector Douglas and his party returned from their expedition to the Daintree and the Mossman. The party had proceeded up the Daintree, beyond where the cedar camps were, and found people busy at work falling trees. O'Grady's party had 700,000 foot at grass ready for rafting down, some of the logs being from 5 to 6 feet through. The country around them was of the richest description, and was described as being eminently suited for the growth of sugar, coffee, and other tropical productions. The cedar party on the Mossman were also busy falling trees and getting them ready for rafting, and in a short time it was expected that there would be a very large quantity available for shipment. Mr. Douglas discovered a new stream, "The Bailey," which was found to be navigable for some distance.³²⁶

On 19 October 1874 information was received at Cooktown of three murders which had been committed by the blacks between Cooktown and the Palmer. The victims were a German, John Stroh³²⁷ and his wife and child. They were last seen alive on 16 October 1874, about 9 a.m., when they were met by some carriers travelling along Wilson's new road, between Battle Camp and the Welcome Waterholes. Mr. Douglas and troopers started on 18 October to follow the blacks. Constable Duff arrived in Cooktown from the scene of the massacre. He brought with him three horses, the property of Stroh, which were handed over to the Curator of Intestate Estates. One of the horses was badly speared in the off shoulder, and there was one horse missing. Constable Duff said that the dray and harness were completely broken up and all the ironwork carried away even to the axle. The loading, consisting of flour, tea, sugar, rice, grog, &c., with the exception of a bag of flour and a bag of rice, was strewn about the dray. Mr. Court stated in evidence "that he had found the bodies of a woman and child lying on the ground quite naked; they were dead; I then saw the body of a man lying dead on his face; they were all bloody about the head and face, as though they had been tomahawked; we saw no spears lying about, nor any spear wounds on the bodies; I saw about 40 blacks, all men, and armed with bundles of spears."³²⁸

The *Telegraph* gave a vivid report of the police action against the natives held responsible for the murder of the Stroh family:

Inspector Coward, during his late raid on the black murderers of the Stroh family, found them carrying about with them the skeletons of two men, which they evidently cherished and held in reverence to such an extent that they would never leave their camp, without these bones accompanied them. The skeletons were evidently those of two high men or priests of the tribe, and Mr. Coward considered that as they were held in such reverence, the greatest punishment that could have been inflicted on the niggers for their murders was to destroy the bones, so accordingly he did, and under a blazing tropical sun Mr. Coward performed the first process of cremation in the York Peninsula.

³²⁴ Brisbane Courier 30 July 1874 p 3.

³²⁵ Queenslander 15 August 1874 p 6.

³²⁶ Brisbane Courier 3 November 1874 p 3.

³²⁷ Also spelt Strahers, see QSA Shauve JUS/N41 274,

³²⁸ Telegraph 2 November 1874 p 3.

A day or so after the Stroh murders had been committed, Mr. Inspector Coward, with Sub-Inspectors Townshend and Douglas, came upon the black vagabonds, and "quietly dispersed" them after having managed to obtain nearly the whole of the property of the unfortunate victims from the poor blacks. Mr. Douglas secured a gin belonging to the tribe and from her through the interpretation of one of his boys elucidated the circumstances of the murders. The gin was present during the whole time, and the horrible torture the poor woman (Mrs. Stroh) underwent, would, we believe, have softened the heart of even that blacky protector Mr. Alfred Davidson, and tempted him to turn the other side—white side we mean. However, it is satisfactory to know that we have such energetic and retributive officers of police around us, so that human vengeance will follow the fiendish acts of those white-livered scoundrels.³²⁹

Johnny Clayton, an aboriginal, and lately a member of the Native Police, Palmerville, was brought down from that place on 18 November, fully committed on a charge of rape. The particulars are: On 10 November, about 2 a.m. Mrs. Kopp heard a noise in her tent. Thinking it to be caused by a dog, she set her own dogs on the intruder. She then discovered that it was a blackfellow, and got up to see if he was robbing the tent. No sooner had she done so than she was seized by the arm, and notwithstanding all her resistance and her calls for help, the offence was committed. The following morning the matter was reported, and Clayton was arrested close to the tent on suspicion. He was fully identified by Mrs. Kopp.³³⁰ Clayton was tried at Townsville in the Northern Supreme Court in the sitting commencing 12 February 1875 on rape and was found guilty and sentenced to death. At 8 am on 15 April 1875 at Rockhampton, he was hanged by the neck until dead.³³¹

Mr Scafe left about late October 1873 with a mob of five hundred head of cattle, en route to the west to select a suitable place for depasturing his cattle. He with others went on ahead, leaving the cattle in charge of his stockmen. Mr. Scafe's prolonged absence caused alarm and the Belyando Native Police were informed. The police commenced a search and by chance, met the Barcoo mailman, who informed them that Mr. Scafe and party had turned up at Home Creek. Mr. Scafe and party were reported as having been five days without rations, and 36 hours without water.³³² On 9 March 1874, Mr Scafe started Joseph Benson to run the creek Scafe was then camped on, down to the main road to ascertain the distance and to find out the state of the water, etc. The creek was a tributary of Sandy Creek, Clermont. Whilst Scafe explored its head and the country towards the main range. When Benson failed to return, Scafe made a search for him. Benson was 31 years of age, about 5ft. 6 in. in height, light hair, and a native of Cumberland. He had been about eight years in the colony, and was a thoroughly honest, trustworthy man. The police skirted with Scafe on 24 March, and, after three days hard tracking, discovered where the blacks had rounded Benson up on horseback and threw spears and nullah nullahs at him for nearly an hour, the horse galloping hard and circling all the time till it was evidently knocked up and he was speared. The police eventually found Benson's remains planted behind a dead log covered with bark, sand, and a few bushes. The only clothing left on the body was his socks. The native troopers, commanded by Mr. Stuart, ran the murderers' tracks for three days, making direct for the Range where they came up with some of the mob and dispersed them.³³³

A gardener, named Ah Wee, engaged on Logan Downs, Peak Downs district was murdered. He was sitting on a log near his humpy, having his dinner, when the blacks stole quietly up behind him, and struck him on the back of the head with a tomahawk, and put an end to the poor fellow.³³⁴

³²⁹ Telegraph 2 November 1874 p 3 & Brisbane Courier 3 November 1874 p 3.

³³⁰ Rockhampton Bulletin 9 December 1874 p 2.

³³¹ Brisbane Courier 6 March 1875 p 7 & Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 17 April 1875 p 2.

³³² Rockhampton Bulletin 23 January 1874 p 2.

³³³ Rockhampton Bulletin 7 April 1874 p 2.

³³⁴ Rockhampton Bulletin 9 April 1874 p 2.

The ill-fated cutter *Albert Edward* left Maryborough about May 1874 on a voyage to the Endeavour, but was wrecked in the northern bend of Rockingham Bay, close to the Murray River, one of her crew being taken by an alligator whilst attempting to reach Cardwell. After the boat had been towed off and refitted, she went to the Herbert River, and took on a cargo of sugar for Townsville; but strong head winds drove her back. Once more she started for Cleveland Bay, but again encountering head winds, she lay-to under the lea of one of the Palm Islands. One night at anchor, a large party of blacks boarded the cutter. The captain had his skull fractured with a club; while the mate, the only other person on board, was speared, although terribly wounded he managed to slip the cable and put the boat before the wind. In course of time she reached Dungeness, at the mouth of the Herbert River, when the news of the outrage was carried to Sub-Inspector Johnstone, he at once started for the scene to try and discover the perpetrators.³³⁵ A promising young alligator, ten feet in length, was shot by Sub-Inspector Johnstone, on his way back up river to his camp, after his trip to the Palm Islands.³³⁶

On 9 November 1874 at Cardwell, there was no meat in town; enquiries revealed the blacks in spearing a bullock, had scared all the store cattle away from the town. Then the Government telegraph party reported that three Government horses had been speared, and that two were dead at the camp, about sixteen miles out of town. All the bridges over the creeks had also been broken down for some distance along the road. A telegram was despatched to Sub-Inspector Armit, at Cashmere, who was on his way to Cardwell for reinforcements being quite unable to keep the blacks in check at Cashmere. Mr Armit, on his arrival at Cardwell started for Sub-Inspector Johnstone at the Herbert, but Johnstone was away at Townsville, answering a frivolous charge that had been brought against him by Mr. Cassady of the Herbert River.³³⁷

Six native police lately enlisted at Rockhampton were brought before A/Commissioner Mr. Barron. They were about to be sent to the Barcoo district under Sub-Inspector Salmond, but one of the troopers appearing delicate was rejected by A/Commissioner Mr. Barron.³³⁸

On or about 31 August 1874 at St. Ann's station, the property of Munro and Rourke, ninety miles distant from Millchester, the cook named Holland was found dead, having been tomahawked, and the boy Arthur, lying wounded. Mr. Bell the manager and the stockman were away at Mount McConnell. The boy was able to identify some of the murderers, Dawvie Dawvie, Johnny Campbell, Tommy, Johnny and Billy. Sub-Inspector Collopy on receiving news of the murder at Ravenswood immediately dispatched a telegram to the Burdekin telegraph station with a request to send a special messenger to the camp of Sub-Inspector Fitzgerald of the Native Police to take up the matter.³³⁹

On Bloomsbury and St Helen's, Proserpine, cattle were being killed in numbers, not for food, but from mere wantonness, and though urgent demands had been sent for the native police, not one had appeared. Mr. G. Waite, of Crystal Brook, advised that the blacks on the evening of 21 August 1874, attempted to plunder Crystal Brook station and murder the inhabitants, but fortunately Mr. C. Waite, the only brother at home at the time, was able to beat them off. Mr. Waite complained that since he and his brother had been living at the station the officer of the N.M. Police in charge of the district had never once been near them.³⁴⁰ On or about 15 October

³³⁵ Brisbane Courier 4 Jul 1874 p 6.

³³⁶ Brisbane Courier 4 Jul 1874 p 6.

³³⁷ Brisbane Courier 28 November 1874 p 6.

³³⁸ Rockhampton Bulletin 22 August 1874 p 2.

³³⁹ Northern Miner 5 September 1874 p 3.

³⁴⁰ Queenslander 12 September 1874 p 10 & Northern Argus 17 September 1874 p 2.

1874, a large mob, exceeding two hundred in number, came up to St. Helen's station. They had hunted into the station two men who were employed sawing timber a short distance away, the blacks pursuing them with spears right up to the station. Mr. Graham, however, was on his guard, having heard their shouts from some distance, and knowing from his blackboys that a large number of blacks were in the neighbourhood, gave them a warm reception. This tribe of blacks has since, in spite of the visit of Sub-Inspector Stuart and his troopers, remained on the station hunting and spearing cattle in all directions. They have even speared some of the stud cattle in the paddock, and several of the milking cows, altogether not less than fifty head have been killed by them. The same blacks have also done a great deal of mischief, hunting and spearing cattle, on the Bloomsbury run. It is not the number killed that has to be considered, but the amount of harm done to a herd by hunting them, rendering them wild, and taking all the condition off the fat cattle.³⁴¹



³⁴¹ Rockhampton Bulletin 29 October 1874 p 2.

1875 started with the appointment of Mr. William Wellington Cairns, CMG, as the fourth Governor of Queensland, on 23 January 1875. Cairns was to leave his post on 10 April 1877. The premier at the time was Arthur Macalister, the member for Ipswich. D. T. Seymour, on 8 March 1876 presented his Annual Report for 1875; set out below are relevant extracts relating to the Native Police:

The chief difficulty in the Palmer District has been occasioned by the aborigines, who in that district have shown themselves to be unusually hostile and intractable. In every other part of the colony the advancing settlers have been able, to enter into some arrangements, more or less friendly, with the native inhabitants; but since the Cook and Palmer Districts have been opened up no instance is known of any communication having been established, or of a single aboriginal having been induced to enter the camp of a white man. Notwithstanding this fact, well known to every man in the districts mentioned, no precautions whatever are taken by travellers for their own protection. Arms are sometimes carried, but in many instances either strapped on pack-horses or stowed in such a manner as to be useless when required. Instead of travelling in company, diggers and packers are to be met with straggling leisurely along in detached parties, some carrying swags, others driving loose horses before them, camping at any spot that may seem convenient without regard to its safety, no watch being kept, or measures adopted, to guard against sudden attacks by the blacks: it is therefore not to be wondered at that loss of life and property is frequently experienced, and that an outcry should be raised about the inefficiency of the Police, without its being taken into consideration that common precautions are necessary on the part of the travellers themselves, and that the principal part of the duty of the Police now is to protect travellers from the consequences of their own want of caution.

The rapid extension of settlement in the West and North renders it necessary to have additional Native Police Stations in those districts; to effect this, however, no increase in the number of the men will be required if the re-arrangement of the troopers suggested in a previous report be sanctioned. The Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the aborigines of this colony, in their report to His Excellency the Governor, offer some valuable suggestions relative to the organisation and management of the Native Police, which, however, have not as yet been carried out. The establishment of a training depot recommended by them had been previously suggested in a report made by the Travelling Superintendent of Police, forwarded to the Colonial Secretary in 1872; the expense, however, has prevented its being adopted.

The abolition of the Native Police Force, as advocated by some, would be attended with very serious consequences, as the services for which they are retained could not be performed by the ordinary police; while, on the other hand, it would appear unnecessary to maintain them in settled districts, where the number and proximity of the inhabitants render them, with ordinary precautions, safe from the attacks of the aborigines; in such localities the plan previously indicated, namely that of attaching trackers to the ordinary police stations, ought to prove sufficient. A middle course might be tried, as an experiment, by augmenting the number of white constables in, say, six selected stations, with the view of ultimately converting them into ordinary police stations, with trackers. Should this prove successful the system could be extended, and in time, as settlement advances, the Native Police may be gradually merged into the ordinary police force.

A change of this nature must, however, be a work of time. The constables must be carefully selected and trained, as there are many details to be attended to, which cannot be here enumerated, but on which the success of the experiment will greatly depend. A commencement might be made by substituting for the Native Police detachments at Apis Creek, Yo Yo, and Blackall, ordinary police stations at Marlborough and Burenda, and attaching to each of them, as well as to the Blackall Station, a sufficient number of Native Police as trackers. Should the experiment prove successful at those places similar changes could afterwards be made elsewhere.

The First Twenty Years

Distribution of Native Police as at 31 December 1875³⁴²

District	Sub-Inspectors First & Second	Constable in Charge of Camp	Native Troopers
Moreton			1
Darling Downs			
Wide Bay			2
Rockhampton	3		14
Springsure	2	2	18
Mitchell	3	2	25
Bowen & Georgetown	12	5	79
Cook & Palmer	6	2	33
Charleville	3	2	17
Maranoa			8

The Colonial Secretary received a telegram from Mr. St. George, stating that two men in charge of the boat crossing at the Laura River were attacked by the blacks:

Bernard McAdam was making a fire for tea, about sundown, 18 February 1875, being camped on the Cooktown side of the first crossing of the Laura River, when he received a spear wound through his thigh. On looking round, he saw a large mob of blacks (about 100) close to him. Upon this he rushed to his tent and seized his carbine, and almost immediately afterwards a man named John Michael Blair, who had come up to repair the boat, ran into the tent, and was speared through the small of the back. He uttered the words "Oh! My God," fell and died. William Peel and William Stephenson were camped close by, and the three fired at the blacks, who went away. Blair was buried the next day, after which, they all cleared out, leaving the mail horses that McAdam was in charge of at the time, together with rations, boat, tents, etc. In connection with this affair, steps were taken to establish at once a police camp in the neighbourhood of the outrage.³⁴³

The Minister for Mines provided the following report upon a new road marked between Cooktown and the Palmer by Sub-Inspector Thomas Coward:

Maytown, Palmer River, February 6, '75. I have the honour to inform you that I left Cooktown December 23, 1874, with 1 orderly, 3 native mounted police, and 11 horses, to carry out your instructions in exploring the country from Cooktown to Maytown, on the Upper Palmer River, for a dray road. I arrived at Maytown January 29, 1875, in 100 miles, marking a line all through; and with little expense a good road can be made of it. The line passes within twenty miles of the Normanby new rush, and was used by Parker the day after I had marked it. It is shorter than the old track by twenty-five miles, so that the rush can be reached from Cooktown in forty-five miles, and good travelling all through, and plenty of water and grass.

The crossing of the Palmer Range is good, and much better than I expected from the appearance of the country in the distance. After crossing the range, the country has the appearance of a gold-bearing country, and I may say all through to Maytown. During my trip through I met three or four parties of diggers "prospecting," and they informed me that gold can be got for miles round in small quantities, and would pay well if rations were only reasonable, and not too far to go for them. As soon as this road is opened there will be a large population of diggers in this part; and diggers will not be afraid to go out to "prospect," as they are now, through the blacks. During my trip through I only met one mob of blacks, and that was on the main branch of the Palmer River. I do not think the blacks will be bad in that part, there not being game enough to support them. I do not remember travelling through any part of Northern Queensland where game was so scarce. The best part of the country I travelled through is about twenty-five miles from Cooktown, with large plains and lagoons; no better country could be asked for a cattle run or a horse station. The head of the Laura River is good, and would make good cattle run, with open plains and good grass and plenty of water. This is

³⁴² Appendix A to 1875 Police Report dated 8 March 1876.

³⁴³ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 27 February 1875 p 6.

about fifty miles from Cooktown, and good travelling all through. There are some eight or ten running springs; no better to be seen in the North, and plenty of timber and free from floods. As soon as the river is crossable, I shall leave this to carry out the remainder of your instructions. No mail has arrived at Maytown for some time.³⁴⁴

On 21 February 1875, a party were camped below Little River and during the day three horses were speared and two the following day, one of which was killed. The party turned out and tracked the blacks to a place where they were eating the horse they had killed. On being surprised they took to the water. The party then proceeded onto Cooktown via the Normanby track. Another party returning from the Bloomfield River struck Douglas' track at about twenty-five miles from Cooktown, and on 20 February had two horses speared — one, the next morning was dead, and burst, evidently, from the effects of a poisoned spear in all probability intended for the men rather than the horses. Another party camped about sixty miles above Edward's Town, left their camp for a short time to go to the beach prospecting, and on their return, discovered the blacks had cleared out the whole hut, tent, clothing, blankets, and rations, leaving them only the clothes they stood in. On 23 February the blacks hunted a shanty keeper located at the middle crossing of the Normanby. The tent was riddled with spears and entirely deserted, there being a free drink for all who choose to partake.³⁴⁵ Sub-Inspector Alexander Douglas continued his relentless pursuit of the troublesome Aborigines but was also able to find time to send to the Government Museum some curious bundles of bark, apparently of melaleuca, which were used as native coffins at the Laura River.³⁴⁶

Because of Wentworth D'Arcy Uhr's reputation, his letter to the editor of the *Cooktown Courier* is reproduced in full:

Permit me a small space in your journal to relate some facts that I have been almost an eye-witness to within the past few months, and endeavour to show the proper authorities the want of a Native Mounted Police station on the Palmer River. I might suggest the right-hand branch as a central position. I have been connected with a butchering business, carried on at the Palmer River, for some months, adjacent to the right hand branch, during which time no less than five diggers' camps have been robbed of all they possessed, four horses killed, and two men speared — one of them, yesterday, was killed whilst rocking the cradle; when I say killed, he was captured by the cannibals, taken down the river below his claim for half-a-mile, and there, on some bare slate rocks, drawn and quartered. He was a celestial; but it matters not who. I, together with four others, namely, Thomas Roberts, Edward Dunn, Nils Peters, and another, seeing the Chinamen rush into our camp at about 3 p.m. on the 1st of June, saying the blacks had chased them within two miles of my camp, and killed one of their mates, besides having possession of all their goods, tents, &c., armed ourselves as well as we could, viz,— we had two breach loading rifles, one single gun, and two revolvers —we got under way by 4 p.m., arrived at Chinamen's camp and found all their property gone, with the exception of some tea and a cradle.

We pushed on to find the missing man; went to where he was last heard working at the river; found only a jacket and hat saturated with blood. We pushed on their tracks, seeing that they had carried the Chinaman with them — we could track them by the spots of blood. In half-a-mile a fearful sight came before us — a pool of blood (about two quarts) lying in a bacon [sic] of the rocks, together with some entrails, were here; a long-handled shovel was lying here covered with blood (with this they had evidently cut the man up in small pieces); the rocks are fearfully stained with blood for some distance round. I suppose, by the blood, the man had been cut up half an hour previous to our arrival. Here some little delay was occasioned, as I, seeing the country was too rough to proceed with horses, sent them home with Thomas Roberts, and awaited his return, our party being too weak without him (or even with him), it afterwards, as you will perceive, almost proved too weak, to our

³⁴⁴ Queenslander 27 March 1875 p 7.

³⁴⁵ Brisbane Courier 19 May 1875 p 2.

³⁴⁶ Queenslander 8 May 1875 p 6.

sorrow. We now got fairly under weigh by about 6 p.m.; we followed the tracks for about another mile — we were all at once stopped by the smell of meat roasting; looking around, we found fires alight, and ovens, similar to what the blacks use, viz., stones placed in the ground, and fire made on them until they are sufficiently hot to cook; these were quite hot and greasy, they having roasted and eaten part of the Chinaman here — part of the sole of his foot was left behind, roasted. I supposed the cannibal's to be not more than one hour in advance. We had now no easy task — night-fall being at hand — and the roughest country I have ever seen in any colony we had to face. I felt almost inclined to jib, being a bad hand on foot; but not knowing how soon it might come to our turn to be killed and eaten, we deemed it our duty to push on. We, with great difficulty — by 6 a.m. on the morning of the 2nd of June, travelling nearly all night — got up to the camp. Now comes the tug of war. I thought our greatest difficulty was overcome, considering we travelled all night over precipices, and only making ten miles headway. Reaching the camp, the best way of attack to recover the stolen property was left to me. They were camped in a deep ravine. We all pushed down on them, with the greatest possible speed. I was met by a spear, being thrown by a native, who appeared very relax at leaving his camp.

The spear fell right at my feet, and came with great force. I saw the blackfellow watching me from below; but as long as I have been amongst blacks, I never saw a spear thrown up hill so far. It now became hard fighting to get into their camp. At last we gained our point — but not for long. The blacks returned within an hour, mustering (fighting men) I dare say 150. Some of our party, during this time, were down in the gorge getting together some of the stolen property, and burning spears, &c. I should, say they had in their camp, at the lowest calculation, at least £100 worth of property. It would take too long to enumerate. I was on the high ground, keeping guard, whilst Roberts and another were engaged below in the camp; but before they could do much good, or rescue any of the stolen property, the blacks rushed on the mountain overhead, and showered down volleys of spears. Being short of ammunition, and hearing the blacks surrounding us, and knowing the bad country behind us, I deemed discretion the better valour; but how to get away was no simple matter, for as soon as we commenced to descend, they would shower spears at us. At last, all being unanimous, we made one rush down a steep valley, and got on to a dividing range, and with great difficulty got away back to our starting point, not in any way sorry, and fully determined to leave such work in future for those who are paid for it. I have written to-day asking for immediate assistance to protect both lives and property from these daring cannibals. Before going any farther, I forgot to mention the sight which came under Thomas Roberts' view in the camp above referred to—the head and neck together with part of the back bone of the Chinaman were stuck on a stump partially eaten. It was only the 30th of May previous to this murder this same mob of blacks rushed another camp of Chinamen; speared one and took all their goods.

I don't know if the officers in the Native Mounted Police stationed around Cooktown always do the amount of good, they get credit for, but the way this tribe attacked myself and others did not look like it. As far as bringing spears into camp we could have brought home hundreds, were that all required. I suppose I have had more experience amongst blacks than any other man of my age in the colony, and never have I yet witnessed such a lot as the ones above referred to; I should not think it any good for a detachment of police to go after them in the country they are now in with any less than twelve black troopers. It is this same tribe during the past few months who have committed the above referred to depredations, and all successfully. I dare say before many days you will hear of some more atrocious murders, for so sure as John proved palatable to their taste, they will come for another. Yours, &c., W. D'Arcy Uhr. P.S. — There are some five or six hundred Chinamen camped about here and 150 Europeans. This camp of mine is only 100 miles from Cooktown. Right Hand Branch, June 2, 1875.³⁴⁷

The Aborigines maintained constant pressure on the Palmer diggings through their relentless marauding, such that Inspector Thomas Clohesy established a permanent police camp at Maytown, with Sub-Inspector Robert Ferrall, four Europeans, and one native trooper.³⁴⁸ Complaints were regularly made by diggers of the want of sufficient police protection. One gentleman laid an

³⁴⁷ Telegraph 26 June 1875 p 5.

³⁴⁸ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 17 July 1875 p 3.

information claiming, as a right, better protection from the Government, for the loss of six horses, speared by the blacks, and on his return trip from Cooktown he had three horses speared, while four were missing (supposed killed). Sub-Inspector Charles Browne was camped with his troopers nine miles from Palmerville, but was unable, through inefficiency of his subordinates, to be of much use.³⁴⁹ The blacks were again troublesome at the Laura. Five Chinamen were speared there, and two disembowelled.³⁵⁰ Mr. W D'Arcy Uhr continued his letter writing campaign in the *Cooktown Courier*:

It is now nearly four months since the outrageous murder perpetrated by the blacks took place within two miles of my camp, and up to the present time no officers or police have visited the place, save one in pursuit of lost troopers. Were the Government officials as energetic in pursuit of the blacks as they are in enforcing the gold-fields regulations with regard to miners' rights, things would be in a different position than they are now, and life and property would be far more secure. For instance, the late 'gold rush' to the head waters of the Palmer, caused by a fabulous report, turned out to be a total failure, and involved the poor diggers in disastrous losses — and from some of them the very arms they possessed for their protection were taken to satisfy the Government fee of 10s. You have only to look at the Burdekin district, and ask yourself what are so many officers and native police doing there? The Burdekin has been so long established that the blacks are comparatively quiet; whilst here, every chance they get, human life and property are sacrificed.³⁵¹

On 18 October 1875, a bullock driver, John Hickey, lost his bullocks and went up river in search of them. He suddenly came upon a mob of blacks, who were rounding up horses. The blacks made after him. Hickey had only three cartridges and fired at the mob, hitting one. The remainder advanced on him. He reloaded as he ran and fired once more but did not stop them, so he was again compelled to fly. He arrived in Normanby and after a short consultation among the men; it was agreed that the horses belonged to Mr. Klatte. Mr. Klatte, Hickey, and three or four others, at once started after the blacks. They found one of Mr. Klatte's horses dead with four spear wounds but they could not overtake the blacks and reluctantly returned to town. Six horses in all were speared or missing, Mr. Klatte losing five of the number. On 8 October, five Chinese carriers were climbing the range, on Coward's track, about three miles from the crossing at the Laura. They were surprised by a party of blacks, numbering from 15 to 20. The Chinamen, however, threw down their bamboos and baskets, and made off down the mountain to Laura. On the following day, 9 October, two white men arrived at Laura. They were informed of the incident but elected to go on. They found the place where the Chinamen were attacked, and saw the contents of their loading, rice, tea, sugar, &c, lying scattered about, but all the baskets, poles, packs, and blankets, were gone. As they came to the last "pinch" on the hill, the foremost man heard his mate scream out. He turned and saw him lying on the ground, with a spear right through him. He got the wounded man moved to a shanty at the Laura. The spear was embedded over 14 inches, having entered the back close to the spine, and between the short ribs, and protruding from the abdomen about 2 inches from the navel. Next day the spear was extracted successfully, and the man was so much better on 12 October. Information was at once forwarded to Sub-Inspector G R Townsend, who reported that he had tracked the blacks, and found five of them on the tableland. Constable Dillon left on 13 October; on his journey down, he came upon the savages, fully fifty in number. He had no rifle with him, but with a liberal use of his revolver, Dillon speedily put the savages to flight, and arrived in town unscathed.³⁵² W. D'Arcy Uhr's criticism seemed to take effect and everybody was exclaiming against the parsimony of the Government in not providing more black police for the protection of diggers and travellers. A public meeting was held by the diggers to express their displeasure with the government. It was noted that the Cooktown banks held 8000 ounces of gold.

³⁴⁹ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 17 July 1875 p 3.

³⁵⁰ Rockhampton Bulletin 22 July 1875 p 2.

³⁵¹ Brisbane Courier 6 October 1875 p 2.

³⁵² Brisbane Courier 30 October 1875 p 5.

It was also reported that good gold had been found but the prospectors had been driven off by the blacks.³⁵³ The following police were transferred to Cooktown to ease the pressure on the native police: Sub-Inspector John Moore, of Maryborough, ordered to Cooktown and Inspector John B Isley, and J. Walker, with 5 native troopers, and 8 native troopers from Rockhampton to Cooktown.³⁵⁴

The people of Cardwell continued to enjoy the unchecked affection of their mutual friends, the blacks in 1875. The Cardwell butcher, Mr. Clark, lost ten fine bullocks and other cattle holders to a lesser degree thus making fresh meat a luxury in Cardwell.³⁵⁵ Although the weather continued excessively hot, though fine, there was heavy flooding up country, at Cashmere, during which the native police camp was entirely swept away and five feet of water in the Telegraph office.³⁵⁶ Then on 7 April 1875, the blacks hit with a vengeance carrying out the ruthless and heinous murders of Mr. William Conn and wife, settlers on Conn Creek, fifteen miles from Cardwell.³⁵⁷ The following account is taken chiefly from the narrative of Edwin Whitfield, Esq.:

At once dispatching his troopers to follow up the tracks, Mr. Johnstone came onto Cardwell to report, returned by boat the same evening accompanied by Mr. B. G. Sheridan, P.M., and Mr. Brittain, the pilot, while at the same time the party, of whom Mr. Whitfield formed one, proceeded overland. On their arrival the body of Mr. Conn was buried in the garden, Mr. Sheridan reading the funeral service. After that nothing remained but to await the return of the troopers sent to track the blacks. The troopers did not return till Saturday afternoon (10 April), having for three days and nights tracked the blacks on foot. At length in one camp they caught three gins, one of whom, horrible to relate, was gnawing one of the feet that had been severed from the body of Mr. Conn. In this camp they also found nearly all the goods, even down to the kerosene lamps, which had been taken from the house. The troopers then retraced their steps, bringing the three gins with them, to the scene of the murder, from signs and words made by the gins, and understood by one of the troopers, they were induced to proceed to where they supposed Mrs. Conn to be, the whole party of whites following. Mrs. Conn's body was soon found about 500 yards from the house. The unfortunate lady had been pierced with a heavy brigalow spear in the right breast; her skull was smashed in just above the right [sic] ear, and her left arm broken—evidently in the vain attempt to defend herself from the blows of a double-barrelled gun which was found lying alongside, with the stock smashed off. Both barrels of the gun were loaded, but the caps were exploded, showing that the gun had missed fire.

After much trouble the following further particulars were obtained from the gins: The murder was committed early on the morning of Wednesday, 7 April. Mr. Conn at the time was engaged wheeling manure to his garden, with his back to the scrub, when a single black sneaked up and speared him in the back, beneath the right shoulder. Conn then turned, but was met by a fearful blow from a tomahawk, which caused instantaneous death. Meanwhile, another part of the mob entered the house, and surprised Mrs Conn preparing breakfast. The demons then dragged her outside and forced her to be witness to the mutilation of her husband. They then carried her through the garden fence and into the scrub, when she, having feigned or fallen into a faint, was left, her captors proceeding with the others to ransack the house. Mrs. Conn then, with, despairing courage, managed to regain the house, obtain a double-barrelled gun, and start off unperceived in the direction of the Cardwell road. But her flight was soon discovered. She was easily followed, and caught some 500 yards from the house. Turning, she pointed the gun at her pursuers; but both barrels missed fire. When found the body was too far decomposed for removal, and had to be buried on the spot, Mr. Whitfield reading the service over the grave. The murder was evidently premeditated, the whole party of murderers consisting of members of various tribes; those from Mount Leach and Hinchinbrook

³⁵³ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 25 November 1875 p 2.

³⁵⁴ Telegraph 20 November 1875 p 2 & Rockhampton Bulletin 28 December 1875 p 2. Moore was presented with a purse of sovereigns £80 by Maryborough Mayor, Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 13 April 1876 p 2.

³⁵⁵ Queenslander 6 March 1875 p 3.

³⁵⁶ Brisbane Courier 20 March 1875 p 7.

³⁵⁷ QSA ID348644, JUS/N45, 244 & 246.

being most numerous, the latter having crossed the channel in six large canoes which were found at the mouth of Conn's creek. The act was most uncalled for, Mr. and Mrs. Conn having ever treated all blacks with whom they came in contact with marked kindness, and had even written frequent letters to Sub-Inspector Johnstone, asking him not to disturb those in his neighbourhood. Conn had been frequently warned to remove from that locality, especially since the blacks had been in on various stations of the Herbert, where they had shown a decidedly hostile spirit.³⁵⁸

Letter to Editor of the *Queenslander* from a Selector, Herbert River:

April 25: ... About three months ago Tommy, a blackfellow, was arrested here for attempting to murder Sambo, an aboriginal. He was taken in the police boat to Cardwell—no evidence against him—was discharged by the Bench; again, put on board the police boat, and I learn was landed on Hinchinbrook Island, at a point across the channel about three miles from where the murders were committed. ... Or is it unlikely for the exiled darkey to induce some of the Hinchinbrook Island blacks to cross the channel with him and there seeks revenge upon the weak and innocent? My explanation may not be clear to your southern readers, but I feel sure that most of my neighbours will agree with me when I say the fate of the blackfellow Tommy has been the sole cause of the untimely end of the unfortunate and much-regretted Mr. and Mrs. Conn. I do not mean to insinuate that the police were not doing their duty when they took Tommy a prisoner to Cardwell; but I do think setting aside the dangerous position it placed Mr. and Mrs. Conn in—that it was a breach of the laws for the police to exile the discharged prisoner. The melancholy results of this blunder are already too well known, and such conduct on the part of the police should be at once brought under the notice of the Government. I further wish to make known to your readers that there has been no mob of blacks camped at any of the Herbert River plantations since the beginning of January last. Some individual, writing from Cardwell, would make it appear that Sub-Inspector Johnstone followed the blacks' tracks from a certain plantation to where the murders were committed, but such a statement is simply erroneous. On the 6th instant I attended an auction sale on the Herbert River, and observed Sub-Inspector Johnstone and his troopers there during the whole time the sale lasted. When the sale closed, late in the afternoon, the Sub-Inspector and troopers proceeded in their boat across the river, to look for a man that was missing, and after about an hour's search found him drowned, a few yards from his place of residence. It was after this occurrence that Sub-Inspector Johnstone proceeded to Cardwell in the police boat. On his way he called in to camp at the mouth of Mr. Conn's creek, and in the morning sent a trooper up with a note to Mr. Conn; the trooper's return brought the melancholy news. I will now ask, in the name of common reason, how can any man's conscience direct him to say that the police followed the tracks of the murderers from the Herbert, when he must have known, as well as every person in this locality, that the police were going to Cardwell in their boat? How is it, if the troopers can track so well, that the body of the unfortunate lady lay unobserved for days only five hundred yards from her house, and Sub-inspector Johnstone, two black troopers, and some Cardwell people camped two or three days at the house? Even then it was the Myall gins that found her.

May 7: Since writing the above, some natives arrived here from the coast who inform me that the principal ruffians connected in the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Conn are running at large, and state their native names to be Tuckinbara, Wackerbare, Combadella, and Barba. The latter is a brother to Tommy, the fellow that was charged with attempt at murder, which I made mention of in the beginning of this letter. A Selector, Herbert River.³⁵⁹

The blacks stuck up and robbed the Government hut at Dalrymple Gap, effecting an entrance by knocking out the side of the hut, taking away all the rations, axes, &c. The native police were on their track two days afterwards, and traced them to the Seymour River, where they were dispersed. Some of the missing property was found in their camp. The native police camp at Lower Herbert consisted of a dwelling-house substantially built on high piles. It might be thought to be suggestive of floods, but on enquiry it appeared that by building in this manner, cool and airy

³⁵⁸ Brisbane Courier 24 April 1875 p 5.

³⁵⁹ Queenslander 5 June 1875 p 9. See also p 171 below.

dining-rooms and store rooms were provided. The huts of the troopers were neatly thatched, and had a picturesque appearance, embedded as they were in tall palms, papaws, and flowering shrubs. Mr. Sub-Inspector Johnston's garden was a perfect gem.³⁶⁰

Inspector William Harris, who was in charge of the Roma police district for the last twelve months, was relieved by Inspector Maxwell Armstrong, who had returned from Europe, after enjoying a year's leave of absence. Mr. William Nutting, who was for some time Inspector of Police in the district, had also been to Europe, but will not return to Roma in that capacity, as he sent in his resignation.³⁶¹ Mr. Sub-Inspector R M Moran, of the Native Police, who was in charge of the Maranoa district for the last three years, has been transferred to the Yo Yo Barracks near Burenda in the Warrego district, vice Mr. Sub-Inspector Alfred Smart, transferred to Brisbane.³⁶² The authorities considered that the black police were no longer required in the district and were withdrawn from the Maranoa. Many of the settlers, however, strongly objected to this decision.

Mr. Sub-Inspector Lionel Towner received orders to start with a detachment of native police to form a new police station on Cooper's Creek.³⁶³ The new detachment, recruited in the neighbourhood of Springsure, passed through Blackall for duty on the lower part of the Barcoo and on Cooper's Creek.³⁶⁴ The blacks were numerous and very troublesome on Cooper's Creek, near its junction with the Thomson River. They had fought and drove back Messrs. Costello and Durack. Both these gentlemen were well armed, but were forced to retreat. A new police barracks in the locality was greatly needed, the chosen site being about fifteen miles west of Forrester's station.³⁶⁵

Inspector Frederick Wheeler resigned his position as Inspector of Native Police at Marlborough, and Sub-Inspector John Stuart was temporarily placed in charge. Inspector Wheeler was one of the oldest officers in the force, and with his little band of black boys at his heels, inspired the aborigines with such a wholesome dread, that it was only necessary, when on any of their marauding expeditions, to say "Wheeler's coming," or "Here's Wheeler," and they would go yelling pell-mell into the bush.³⁶⁶ The Marlborough people complained that since the removal of the native police they had suffered much annoyance from the blacks, who congregated in large numbers, and when under the influence of drink, caused them great anxiety, as savages were dangerous neighbours to have at any time, and there was no knowing to what extremes they might go when under the influence of liquor which it seems they were able to obtain ad libitum.³⁶⁷ Sub-Inspector Matthew Collopy replaced Sub-Inspector John Isley as officer in charge of the Rockhampton district.³⁶⁸ Sub-Inspector George Dyas left Rockhampton on 4 May 1875 for Clermont, on transfer to that station.³⁶⁹

The commemoration of Her Majesty's Birthday was celebrated at Rockhampton on 24 May 1875 by the annual distribution of blankets to the Aborigines. The numbers as far as could be ascertained being fifty-nine gins with thirteen piccaninnies, and forty-three blackfellows. At ten o'clock, the precincts of the Court House were thronged by a large number of townspeople. The distribution was presided over by Mr. Beddek, assisted by Sub-Inspector Collopy and a few constables. The

³⁶⁰ Telegraph 26 January 1875 p 3 & Queenslander 5 June 1875 p 6.

³⁶¹ Western Star and Roma Advertiser 27 March 1875 p 2.

³⁶² Queenslander 17 April 1875 p 9.

³⁶³ Brisbane Courier 1 May 1875 p 7.

³⁶⁴ Rockhampton Bulletin 12 April 1875 p 2.

³⁶⁵ Brisbane Courier 9 January 1875 p 7.

³⁶⁶ Daily Northern Argus January 1875 p 2.

³⁶⁷ Daily Northern Argus 29 April 1875 p 2.

³⁶⁸ Daily Northern Argus 10 May 1875 p 2.

³⁶⁹ Rockhampton Bulletin 11 May 1875 p 2.

gins each received a blanket—a half-one to the piccaninnies. They seemed in great haste to get through the ceremony as quickly as possible, it being with great difficulty that replies in answer to queries, as "What 'em your name?" could be obtained by the black trooper who assisted. Next came the men, each of whom was allotted a blanket. Three of these blackfellows were "kings," his Majesty King "Mickey," of Gracemere, leading off. The whole of the natives was then defiled in an orderly manner through the Court House, assembling in the yard attached and in answer to a call returned a few hearty cheers for Her Majesty the Queen.³⁷⁰ Sub-Inspector Earnest Carr arrived at Rockhampton on 23 October 1875 by the *Lady Young*, from Brisbane, with six native troopers, to be stationed at Colhombra, Mackenzie River, where it was said the blacks were troublesome since the withdrawal of the native force some months since.³⁷¹ Mr. G D Nowlan stationed on Mistake Creek in charge of the detachment of Native Police was transferred to Cooktown. He was replaced by Mr. Fredrick Wheeler, who was reappointed a Second-Class Sub-Inspector on 15 October 1875.³⁷²

On 1 February 1875, the blacks chased two sawyers, Germans, into Georgetown from their camp, four miles out; and afterwards robbed their hut of everything moveable. A party of volunteers started without delay for the purpose of dispersing them, and after meeting with some resistance succeeded in driving the blacks for a distance of ten miles down the Etheridge River. Four valuable draught horses were also speared within two miles of the township.³⁷³ Great satisfaction was expressed at the arrival of Mr. Burrowes to take charge of the detachment of native police, Georgetown.³⁷⁴ There was a great want of protection in Georgetown; the police force consisted of one senior-sergeant at Georgetown, and one constable at Charleston, besides the officer in charge of the district, which includes Normanton, Cloncurry, and other stations. Mr. Sub-Inspector W E Armit arrived on 3 June 1875 with a detachment of native mounted police, to be stationed in the vicinity of the town.³⁷⁵ A Native Police detachment was fixing up their camp at the Commissioner's camp, the Government having purchased same from Mr. Ramsey. Mr. Inspector John Isley³⁷⁶ left on a tour of inspection of the different stations within his large district, which will probably take him about two months to accomplish.³⁷⁷ Mr. Isley is expected to arrive from the Norman on 18 July. Sub-Inspector Burrowes has gone to Townsville on sick leave, and Sub-Inspector Armit had returned from a thorough patrol of the district and was now at camp in Georgetown.³⁷⁸ Sub-Inspector Armit succeeded in coming across the blacks who speared the horses on the Percy, and judging by the number of warlike implements he brought back, he had not been on a fruitless errand.³⁷⁹

Sub-Inspector Henry Finch was officially reported as deceased. He committed suicide at Mr. Gray's station, Glendower, on 11 July 1875. The instrument used by him was a firearm, and it was supposed that at the time of the fatal act he was labouring under temporary insanity induced by excessive drinking. When he shot himself, he was travelling with rations from Cape River en route to Hughenden Station.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁰ Rockhampton Bulletin 25 May 1875 p 2.

³⁷¹ Daily Northern Argus 28 June 1875 p 2.

³⁷² Rockhampton Bulletin 28 October 1875 p 2.

³⁷³ Brisbane Courier 2 February 1875 p 2.

³⁷⁴ Queenslander 8 May 1875 p 4. I can find no official confirmation of the appointment of Burrowes as a Sub-Inspector of Native Police.

³⁷⁵ Rockhampton Bulletin 4 & 18 June 1875 p 2.

³⁷⁶ Promoted Second Class Inspector 1 July 1875.

³⁷⁷ Rockhampton Bulletin 13 July 1875 p 2.

³⁷⁸ Rockhampton Bulletin 8 September 1875 p 2.

³⁷⁹ Rockhampton Bulletin 26 November 1875 p 2

³⁸⁰ Capricornian 17 July 1875 p 456. Finch died intestate, see Estate notice, Brisbane Courier 17 July 1876 p 1.

A man named E. Robinson was brought into the Peak Downs Hospital on 2 May 1875 in rather a dangerous state from a spear wound in his left hip. The wounded man, in company with his mate, was travelling on foot from the Palmer to Clermont, when on 30 April 1875 they were suddenly attacked by four blacks. One blackfellow threw a spear at Robinson and wounded him in the left hip, the spear entering across the back to the backbone. The wounded man managed to break off the spear — leaving about five inches of it in his body. The travellers threw away their swags, and retreated back about six miles towards Grosvenor Downs. Dr. Taylor was immediately in attendance, and extracted the spear. Robinson is now progressing very favourably. Mr. Sub-Inspector GD Nowlan started for the scene of the outrage shortly after the information was conveyed to him.³⁸¹ The blacks were again becoming troublesome near Bowen, having speared a horse and some cattle at Proserpine.

The Police Magistrate received a telegram on 12 April 1875 from Mr. W.G. Macartney, of Bloomsbury, informing him that Frederic Toll, who was employed looking after Mr. F. T. Amherst's selection of land at the O'Connell River, was found murdered by the blacks. Messrs. Bode³⁸² and Masterton were in company with Mr. Macartney when the body was found. The blacks in that part of the district had been very troublesome for some time past—spearing and hunting cattle, but this was the first time they had committed murder for a long period.³⁸³ In consequence of representations made to the authorities, Sub-Inspector Stuart received instructions to form a camp of Native Police at Bloomsbury, half way between Mackay and Bowen. The only station of native police in this district has hitherto been at Nebo, and the distance from that place to the outlying stations was too great for the police to give the squatters adequate protection from the blacks.³⁸⁴

The stereotypical view of the Native Police is that they operated regular armed patrols from their camp or station by horseback to surveil an area, then returned to camp to rest and then patrolled another area. The assumption that Native Police spent their waking-life chasing myall blacks to kill is nonsense. They were no different to any other police force who from time to time was directed by government to carry out humanitarian activities like search and rescue and other social services. A Mr F. E. Du Faur financed an expedition to search of Classen. Adolph Classen was a member of Leichhardt's expedition and it was thought that he survived and lived amongst the Aborigines. Andrew Hume was leader with Lewis Thompson and Timothy O'Hea, Victoria Cross winner. On the way to Cooper's Creek they perished. Sub-Inspector J. McKay Dunne was enlisted in their search and rescue. The following are the relevant documents:

Bulloo Barracks, Jan. 14, 1875.

F. E. Du Faur, Esq., Sydney

It is with great regret that I have to inform you that my telegram of the 24th December was incorrect, and that poor O'Hea has not yet been found. You will see by the enclosed, a copy of a portion of Ilbery's letter to me, how I was led astray. I went to Nockatunga as he requested, and when I got there and found out the mistake, I took native blacks out and spent a week in thoroughly searching the country, but without success. The country out there is so very dry now that I had to camp some twelve miles from my work, and carry water for the blacks; but I trust that when the rain comes the blacks will yet find his remains. J. McKay Dunne.

³⁸¹ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 8 May 1875 p 2.

³⁸² The reader may remember Mr Bode, who according to Mr Reynolds entered into a "formal understanding" with the Aborigines to allow them in, provided they stopped killing cattle and white men. See pp 95 & 96 above.

³⁸³ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 17 April 1875 p 2.

³⁸⁴ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 22 May 1875 p 2 & Queenslander 5 June 1875 p 3.

[Enclosure.] Extract from J. Ilbery's letter: The blacks bring me in word that an old gin has seen O'Hea's body in a creek, lying untouched by dogs, not very far from where Hume was found. Come out, and we will hold an inquiry. I will await your answer before doing anything. J. ILBERY.³⁸⁵

The next case I raise was quite unusual in that the complainant accused the Native Police of not only being incompetent but of committing possible nonfeasance (failing to enforce the law):

... about four years ago (1871), the son of the petitioner (Frederick Shurey), a boy of nine years old, was abducted by the blacks; and search for him had been unsuccessful. The petitioner complained that efficient search had not been made by the native police; that on one occasion they had captured a native known to be of the tribe that had taken away the boy to the Wall; that they allowed him to escape from custody in the night; that the tribe was allowed to return to the Wall without further inquiry or pursuit to enforce information with regard to the stolen boy; and that from that time no steps had been taken for the boy's recovery.³⁸⁶

Here we have an allegation against the Native Police that rarely, if ever, is found in the annals of native police work that they conspired with the Aborigines to kidnap a white boy. What the Native Police should have done according to the Black Armband Brigade's paradigm was to thrash the captive tribesman within an inch of his life and shoot the remainder of the tribe. The point I am trying to make is that although the Native Police conducted armed patrols of troublesome areas with instruction to return fire, in situations of self-defence, upon resisting blacks, their activities cannot be characterised as a single solitary function (killing blacks) exclusive of all other policing requirements and demands. The Native Police carried out many general duties and community services.³⁸⁷ They cannot be compared to the Einsatzgruppen and called death squads.³⁸⁸

The *Brisbane Courier* ran an editorial on 13 March 1875 about the merits of the Native Police and declared:

The Native Police Force is condemned because, while it fails to affect its purposes, it is necessarily and essentially an illegal and immoral method of compassing these ends. Bands of aborigines many of whom have been convicted of crime, equipped with horses and firearms, and officered mostly by young white men, are not an instrument of the law which even necessity can justify. The principal change required being in point of fact, simply the substitution of white troopers of character, with black trackers in addition if necessary, for the present black troopers.³⁸⁹

Then the *Brisbane Courier* of 2 April 1875, moved onto the issue arising out of two letters to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* by Charles Heydon and AL McDougall which caused the Secretary of State for the Colonies to write to the Governor, Lord Normanby for an explanation of the conduct of the Native Police to which Normanby replied:

... that the barbarities so frequently imputed to the native troopers were often greatly exaggerated, and that these stories of unnecessary violence were never sustained by satisfactory proof. He added, however, an expression of regret that more had not been done to civilise the natives than had been attempted. "This", he added, "has been caused more by the apparent impossibility of effecting any good result than from my indisposition to attempt it. Last year I appointed a Royal Commission to

³⁸⁵ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 18 February 1875 p 4. See also p 77 above.

³⁸⁶ LC Hansard 31 August 1875 pp 1134-1135.

³⁸⁷ Like: Two Kanakas captured at Cullin-la-Ringo by Sub-Inspectors Dyas and Carr with black troopers. Maryborough Chronicle, etc 16 July 1878 p 2. Aiding the Gold Warden in enforcing licence fees against Chinese, Brisbane Courier 20 August 1879 p 6. Native police under Inspector Nicholson in search of Maria Moran, Mackay Mercury, etc 1 November 1879 p 2 & 5 November 1879 p 2.

³⁸⁸ See p 217 below.

³⁸⁹ Page 4.

enquire into the matter, and upon their recommendation a small vote has passed the Assembly this year. I have appointed the same Commission, with the view of their carrying out their own recommendations. I own I am not sanguine of the result, but I shall greatly rejoice if any improvement in the condition and habits of the natives were to result from this step.” ... it was accompanied by a report from the Commissioner of Police which corrected some of the extreme statements which had given rise to the correspondence.³⁹⁰

Arising out of the above, the *Brisbane Courier* kept a watching brief over this issue and on 6 April 1876 published the following:

Downing street, January 4, 1876

To the Secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society.

Sir, With reference to your letter of the 29th of December, 1874 in which you suggested that the members of a Royal Commission, originally appointed in Queensland, to enquire into the condition of the aborigines, should be instructed to investigate certain charges of cruelties preferred against the native mounted police, I am directed by the Earl of Carnarvon to acquaint you that His Lordship has recently received a despatch on this subject from the Governor of the colony.

2. From this despatch it appears that the members of the Royal Commission, who were early in the present year requested to take into their consideration the desirability of instituting a special enquiry into the conduct and general working of the native police force, have now reported against an enquiry at the present time. They urge, amongst other things that almost the only persons who could afford trustworthy information are the native police officers themselves, whose testimony, if favourable to the force would not satisfy the public; and that all that could be advanced either in favour of or against the force is already known to most persons resident for any length of time in the colony.

3. The Governor of Queensland, in forwarding the Commissioners report, has also expressed his opinion that, in the absence of any specific case of outrage being charged against them, the condition or status of the native police does not appear to require that an investigation into their discipline and general habits and proceedings should be at present instituted, and considers that, having regard to the lawless and savage acts which often, under most difficult and urgent circumstances, they are called upon to repress, he believes that there is no reason to think that their officers overlook inhumanity towards the wild tribes, or that such inhumanity has been of frequent occurrence.

4. The members of the late Commission, however, whilst thinking a special enquiry unnecessary, acknowledge that the organisation and discipline of the force is not free from defects, arising from the inexperience of some of the officers who have not proper control over their men, and from the absence of any organised system of recruiting the aboriginal troopers, or of any depot where officers and troopers can be instructed in their duties.

5. To meet these and other defects in the existing condition of the force, the Commissioners have recommended various remedies of which the principal is the establishment of a general depot, in some central position, while others and men can be drilled and otherwise instructed in their duties; and the Governor has reported that he hopes to avail himself of the first opportunity of urging that provision be made for the formation and maintenance of such a school of discipline. The question of admitting native evidence in the colonial courts, a matter of great importance, is also under consideration.

6. Lord Carnarvon, knowing the great interest which the society feel in all details relative to this very important question, desires me to request that you will lay this communication before the Aborigines Protection Society for their information. I am, Sir, your obedient servant, Robert G. W. Herbert.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Page 2 & 31 May 1875 p 2. See Paul Dillon, *Inside the Killing Fields, Hornet Bank, Cullin-la-Ringo & The Maria Wreck*, Connor Court, Brisbane, 2020.

³⁹¹ Page 3.

For completeness of the record, I quote the report referred to above as follows:

Brisbane, 6 May, 1875.

Sir, We have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 9th April, enclosing copy of minute by His Excellency the Governor, on the subject of the organization and discipline of the Native Mounted Police, and requesting that the Commissioners should take into their consideration the desirability of instituting a special enquiry into the conduct and general working of this branch of the police force. Although the Commissioners are aware that adverse rumours, with respect to the discipline, conduct, and organization of the Native Mounted Police, have, from time to time been current both here and in England, they do not consider that any useful or satisfactory result could be arrived at by enquiry at the present time.

Nearly the only persons who could afford reliable information upon the subject are the Native Police officers themselves, whose testimony, if favourable to the force, would not satisfy the public; and, if unfavourable, would probably reflect upon, or, possibly, criminate the witnesses themselves. Speaking generally, it may be said that all that could be advanced, either in favour of or against the force, is already known to most persons who have been resident for any length of time in Queensland. It may be interesting to trace briefly the circumstances which have resulted in the establishment of this Native Mounted Police Force, which has been the subject of so much animadversion.

As new districts have from time to time been settled, the country belonging to one or more tribes of aborigines has been occupied by the white settlers, and though the primary occupation has seldom been resented as an invasion of territory, it has invariably been followed by misunderstandings as to the rights of property, and by individual aggression culminating in actual hostilities on the part of the native tribes.

In the early days of the colonies, attempts were made to meet this by detachments of regular troops, but the aborigines easily avoided direct collision with the military force, and made incursions where there was no adequate protection available.

The employment of aboriginal trackers to lead the parties of soldiers was tried with somewhat better success, and eventually the troops were replaced by constables, who were more experienced in bushcraft. The employment of a civil force in what were really military operations, involved serious difficulties. It was found also that the black trackers constituted the effective part of the force, and ultimately the Native Mounted Police was organised on a military basis, with white officers and aboriginal troopers.

As at present constituted each detachment of Native Mounted Police consists of one white inspector, one white camp-keeper, and eight aboriginal troopers.

Before the establishment of this force the outer districts were often left without protection, and the settlers were under the necessity of repelling aggression personally. This, however, was not only inconvenient and insufficient, but often otherwise illustrated the inexpediency of leaving the execution of the law in the hands of persons seeking redress for personal injury.

The continuance of the Native Police Force, as at present constituted has been and is at the present time, strongly objected to by many, but hitherto no practicable substitute has been suggested, and without an armed force the frontier settlements could not be maintained. The more important defects of the present system have, therefore, been sought out for the purpose of considering what remedies are applicable.

The chief defects to which the attention of the commissioners have been directed are:

1. Officers are frequently appointed to take charge of detachments who have had little or no experience in the duties they have to perform, and, as a consequence, they have not that control over their men which is indispensable to the maintenance of proper discipline, and the effective performance of their duties.

2. There is no organised system of recruiting the aboriginal troopers and no depot where either officers or troopers can be instructed in their duties prior to being employed on active service.

3. There is no established term of service at the expiration of which the troopers may return to their tribes, or if any such rule does exist it is not in all cases adhered to.

To remedy those defects, it is suggested:

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1. That there be two travelling general inspectors to visit the several detachments of native mounted police, to see that they regularly patrol their district; to report upon their efficiency, the special qualifications of the officers, and the manner in which they perform their duties. All such reports to be forwarded through the Chief Commissioner of Police to the Minister.

2. That there be a general depot established in a central position (such as Bowen) where both officers and troopers can be drilled and instructed in their duties.

3. That each detachment consists of one officer in command, one assistant officer or cadet, one white constable in charge of the camp, and eight aboriginal troopers.

4. That no person be appointed inspector until he shall have served at least one year as an assistant inspector under an inspector in charge of a detachment on active service, and shall have obtained a certificate of good conduct and efficiency from the general inspector.

5. That the aboriginal troopers be engaged for a definite term of service — say, three years; at the expiration of which they may re-engage for a similar, or other term or return to their tribes or district from which they enlisted; and that they be provided with means of transit and protection from hostile tribes on the route home. And,

6. That in order to induce suitable persons to join the force, the pay of Native Police officers be increased.

Attention has been directed to the infrequency of the arrest of aboriginal criminals. The difficulties of procuring evidence against such delinquents which could be accepted in courts of law; the serious objections to the association of aboriginals with white prisoners, and that the close confinement, discipline, and food adopted in the gaols is prejudicial to the health of men who have been unaccustomed to the restraint of civilised life.

1. With regard to the infrequency of arrests, it is easy to understand that this may have arisen from the difficulty of obtaining a conviction, which must rest chiefly on the evidence of aboriginals, and that therefore the capture of an offender, and his subsequent release, without punishment, would have a more prejudicial effect on the minds of the aborigines generally, than results from a disregard of all minor transgressions.

2. The existing law relating to the evidence of aboriginal witnesses does not seem to be adequate to meet the case of offenders of this class.

3. The Aborigines do not feel it to be any disgrace to be imprisoned and well fed, while their association with white prisoners familiarises them with various expedients for the evasion of the law, and their health suffers from close confinement.

To meet these difficulties, it is suggested that a penal establishment be formed on one of the many islands near the coast though sufficiently distant to render escape difficult, and that the aboriginal prisoners be employed in outdoor pursuits, such as cultivating corn and vegetables, erecting buildings, and such other works as may be found suited to their capacity and calculated to preserve their health. That a school be formed in which such as showed an aptitude should be instructed, and the rudiments of the Christian religion inculcated.

That the Legislature be invited to pass an Act to facilitate the admission of the evidence of aboriginal witnesses in the case of aboriginal offenders, and to give extended powers of summary jurisdiction to the courts of petty session in like cases — such extended jurisdiction to apply only to districts to be defined from time to time by the Governor by proclamation.

It is believed that the apprehension and conviction of offenders would be greatly facilitated by the establishment of a suitable place and system of punishment, as there can be little doubt that courts and juries are loath to pronounce prisoners guilty when the punishment prescribed by law is either unsuited or inadequate to the case, while the police are discouraged in the apprehension of offenders who are almost certain to escape conviction through the imperfections of the law or its administration. It is also inferred that by the provision of a system of punishment of a comparatively mild character, the native tribes would eventually be induced to surrender individual offenders rather than risk hostile collision with the police; and that those who returned after the expiration of a sentence would endeavour to restrain their companions from acts which might lead to a repetition of punishment. We have the honour, &c, W. L.G. Drew, A. C. Gregory, Chas. Coxen, Commissioners.³⁹²

³⁹² Telegraph 8 April 1876 p 5.

THE NATIVE POLICE. To the Editor of the *Telegraph* from Alfred Davidson.

On behalf of the Aborigines Protection Society, permit me to say we do not entertain the views you attribute to us in your leader of last night; but we do contend that our aborigines should have reasonable protection afforded them. As these men cannot protect themselves, protectors ought to be appointed to watch over their welfare, and also reserves of land set apart for their use.

The native police should be reformed. The troopers are not soldiers, nor under discipline, save by assumption of illegal authority. They are not constables: they can neither execute a warrant nor give evidence on oath. The officers are constables, and the legal status of the troopers is only that of men called to assist them in their acts.

To the Parliamentary Committee, in 1861, it was stated that the officers, in case of a fight, cannot or do not execute any authority at all over the men. Native police should not be allowed to drive away men from their work. Aborigines should not be fired upon through wantonness and without necessity. Children ought not to be carried off by force for service. The persons of women should be protected from violence. Many colonists are of opinion that the native police do more harm than good. A case in point is quoted in the *Courier* of April 11.³⁹³



³⁹³ *Telegraph* 13 April 1876 p 3.

1876 for Cooktown and district, the New Year commenced with the arrival of Sub-Inspector O'Connor and 24 troopers aboard the *SS Western* together with 40 remounts. New posts were established, which included Sub-Inspector O'Connor at the Laura, so that he could command Hell's Gates,³⁹⁴ which would ensure greater protection for travellers. Inspector Clohesy returned from the Palmer to arrange the placement of the new troopers.³⁹⁵

On 12 January, Senior-sergeant Devine and four native troopers from Cooktown were despatched to Byerstown, a new rush thirty miles from that township. The rush was reported good and there were two hundred miners on the ground. Inspector Clohesy, Sub-Inspector Moore and four constables were reported ill from fever. Cooktown was a gigantic hospital, hardly a house without one or two sick persons.³⁹⁶ A Chinaman was speared and killed on the Palmer; immediately the case was reported, Devine and his troopers started in pursuit of the fiendish murderers, following them over the range to Hell's Gates, where, to use a Q.N.P. phrase, "they were quietly, and this time very quietly, dispersed." The country crossed by Sergeant Devine and his troopers was exceedingly rough, and "killing" on horses. For miles they had to lead the animals, which, when the journey was over, were quite knocked up.³⁹⁷ Mr. Hogsflesh, the mail contractor, left Cooktown as usual on 31 January 1876 with the mails, in company with Mr. S. Byrnes of Messrs. Robinson and Byrnes, and reached Battle Camp, the scene of so many black outrages, in safety on 2 February. They camped for the night, and turned the horses out. During the night they were awakened by signs of uneasiness from the horses. Early in the morning, Hogsflesh went to round them up while Byrnes got breakfast, when he was attacked by a mob of blacks hurling a deluge of spears at him, fortunately without hitting him, but spearing one of his valuable horses so severely that it was mortally wounded. Byrnes in order to save himself ran towards Hogsflesh. The savages then ransacked the camp, carrying off everything they could lay their hands on, including the mail bags, which were conveyed a hundred yards away, but thanks to the energy of Messrs. Byrnes and Hogsflesh the mail bags were recovered. The police were informed of the matter.³⁹⁸

George the Greek and W. Horsley, two carriers, wrote to the *Herald* complaining of the inactivity of the Native Police. They stated that they lost twelve valuable horses speared—with five others maimed, making seventeen in all, by the blacks on 23 January 1876, six miles from the lower township, Palmerville. When mustering, four saddle horses, unknown to them, were found speared, the weapons still protruding from the animals. This depredation was reported to Sub-Inspector Smart. Of the seventeen found speared, one was killed and roasted, and eleven of the remaining 17 died.³⁹⁹

The *Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser* of 26 February 1876 made the following observations on the Palmer goldfields:

Continued reports reach us of depredations being daily committed by these black savages, whose insatiate thirst for blood it seems impossible to quench. Yesterday the "flying packer" arrived in

³⁹⁴ Story of Hell's Gates, *Queenslander* 8 June 1878 p 301.

³⁹⁵ *Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser* 15 January 1876 p 4.

³⁹⁶ *Brisbane Courier* 14 January 1876 p 2.

³⁹⁷ *Daily Northern Argus* 19 February 1876 p 2.

³⁹⁸ *Daily Northern Argus* 7 February 1876 p 2.

³⁹⁹ *Rockhampton Bulletin* 19 February 1876 p 2.

town, and reported considerable ravages by the niggers on the road near the Laura, the bloodthirsty scoundrels occupying a piece of country which it is a terror to white men to pass. Some of our informant's horses were speared, as were several belonging to teamsters camped at the Laura, and he reports that some Chinamen, and one European, were supposed to have been murdered by them. Some portions of the route are strewn with Chinese remains, said to have been the victims of these terrible marauders. Surely there is something radically wrong when these continued reports of murderous outrages reach us almost daily, considering the large number of police that is distributed over the district, and calls for some immediate steps being taken in the matter. Valuable property is being destroyed hourly, horses speared, men killed, and loading scattered, although said to be done in almost immediate sight of police camps. The native police are generally acknowledged a very useful body in keeping the roads safe for travelling — a duty which they are in our district specially entrusted with, but if they do not do this effectively, what is their use? We know for a fact that there are many exaggerated reports of black depredations, and in some cases, they have been proved totally without foundation; and we therefore trust that in future people will be just, and only condemn a very useful body when strictly deserved.⁴⁰⁰

At the Lower Normanby crossing, the blacks made a raid on 15 April 1876 on the horses belonging to the packers detained there by the fresh in the river; Mr. James McNamara lost two horses killed and four speared (though alive) within a mile and a half of the crossing. Four others were driven about five miles down the river, and then slaughtered; two of them (the fattest) were cut up in a most artistic way, as shown by the debris left. Sub-Inspectors Nowlan and Townsend were quickly on the tracks, with some dozen troopers.⁴⁰¹

In Annual Report for the year ending 31 December 1876, the Commissioner of Police made the following observation:

Since my last report, new stations have been formed at Cairns, Smithfield, Thornborough, Walsh River, Kingsborough, Oxley, Townsville, and Highfields; the total number of stations is now one hundred and nine, and in consequence of the rapid extension of settlement on all sides, at least twelve additional stations will have to be formed immediately, and the number of constables at some of those already formed must be increased.⁴⁰²

Strength and Distribution of Native Police throughout the Colony 31 December 1876⁴⁰³

District	Native Police Officers	Constables	Troopers
Springsure	2	1	10
Mitchell	3	4	29
Bowen & Georgetown	13	5	73
Cook & Palmer	6	3	52
Charleville	3		18
Maranoa			7
Total	27	13	189

⁴⁰⁰ Page 4.

⁴⁰¹ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 15 April 1876 p 3.

⁴⁰² Report from the Commissioner of Police for the Year 1876. Brisbane, 28th April, 1877.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

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Distribution of Native Police State-wide for 1876-Pugh's Almanac

Location	Magistrate & C.P.S.	Police	Native Troopers
Barcoo River		1 sub-inspector	8
Belyando River		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	10
Bowen Downs		1 sub-inspector	8
Bulloo River		2 sub-inspectors, 1 constable	8
Burketown and Norman River	Alfred Henry	1 sub-inspector, 1 sergeant, 2 constables,	8
Charleville	W. E. P. Okeden	Inspector Thomas Thornton; 1 senior constable, 2 constables	2
Clermont	G. P. M. Murray; C.P.S. William Cave	sub-inspector George Dyas; 1 sergeant, 4 constables	1
Columbra		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	8
Cooktown	Howard St. George; C.P.S. James Pryde	Inspector Thos. Clohesy; 1 senior sergeant, 2 senior, 26 constables	5
Craigie		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	10
Cunnamulla	W. O. Norris	1 sergeant, 2 constables	2
Curriwillingham		1 senior constable	1
Etheridge	J. B. Ramsay; C.P.S. B. C. McGroarty	2 sub-inspectors, 1 senior sergeant, 1 senior, 6 constables,	2
Kirknie Creek		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	9
Marlborough		1 sub-inspector	8
Millchester	C. S. Dicken; C.P.S. W. M. Mowbra	1 senior sergeant, 1 senior, 5 constables	1
Mitchell		1 senior, 1 constable	1
Murray River		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	9
Nebo, Fort Cooper	C.P.S. G. F. Price	1 sub-inspector, 2 constables	10
Palmer River	P. J. Sellheim	3 sub-inspectors, 2 sergeants, 1 senior and 16 constables	11
Ravenswood	C.P.S. W C Samuell	1 senior, 2 constables	1
Roma	John Murphy	Inspector J B Nutting; 1 sergeant, 2 senior constables, 5 constables	2
St. George	Thomas Mowbray	1 sergeant, 2 constables	1
Saxby		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	9
Somerset	H. M. Chester	1 coxswain, 4 water police	8
Springsure	J. G. MacDonald	Inspector Fredk. Murray; 1 senior sergeant, 3 constables	1
Surat	R. T. Taylor	1 sergeant, 1 constable	1
Townsville	Fitzroy Somerset; C.P.S. W. H. Dean	1 sub-inspector, 1 senior sergeant, 1 senior, 12 constables	2
Western Creek		2 sub-inspectors	12
Yo Yo Creek		2 sub-inspectors, 1 senior constable, 1 constable	6

The Commissioner of Police received the following telegram on 16 April 1876 from Inspector Clohesy, at Cooktown, "No news of importance from the Hodgkinson. Douglas starting for Maytown with six native troopers, two constables, two horse drays, and fourteen saddle horses. The banks starting on 1 May, I retain escort to take up their money. There are 16,000 ounces of

gold at Maytown waiting escort. There are no drays travelling yet.”⁴⁰⁴ Sub-Inspector Smart, of the Native Police, who had returned with the Commissioner from the new rush at Hodgkinson, on 18 April, reported that the rush was a total failure; that diggers were looking for Mulligan to hang him; and that eight hundred men were on their way to Cooktown to burn down the *Herald* Office. Smart stated that it was the wish of the Commissioner to prevent the rush spreading further until something more definite was known concerning it. Serious riots were expected on the Palmer. Smart advised he would remain until further instructed; have been prevented from getting back by floods.⁴⁰⁵ On 22 May 1876, a report reached Cooktown that 16 horses were missing at the eight-mile, said to be speared. Mr. Sub-Inspector Moore immediately despatched the whole force at his command, under Sergeant Armstrong, who after a thorough ransacking of the country, failed to find any trace of blacks.⁴⁰⁶ As at 24 June 1876, on Hodgkinson gold-field, the entire police force consisted of two men, and these only arrived in the early part of June. Mr. Douglas, with his detachment of native police, was stationed there, and, by constantly patrolling the neighbourhood, had prevented any outrages being committed by the blacks.⁴⁰⁷

The Colonial Secretary provided the following report of Sub-Inspector Douglas regarding the opening up of Trinity Bay:

Trinity Harbour,
September 23rd, 1876.

I have the honour to inform you that, in pursuance of your instructions, received by me at Thornborough on the 13th instant (September), I left on the 17th, in company with Mr. Warner, his brother, and Mr. Williams, Constable McDermott and six troopers; and have much pleasure in stating, that we arrived at the entrance to Trinity Harbour on the 23rd—a good road all the way, with the exception of ten miles of scrub and one mountain (a good spur.) My reason for taking Mr. Williams was, that he had organized a party, under himself and Mr. Warner, to go out for six weeks, and explore for a road, and he agreed to break up his party and put himself under my orders, as also lending me his horses. I cannot speak too highly of his assistance. I intend to shift my depot over here, as there is splendid feed for the horses, and also as the late road between Cooktown and the Hodgkinson will now be shut up, and all the patrolling will be on this road. I do not deem it advisable to remove the Native Police Barracks from Thornborough this year, as there will not be time to form barracks before the wet season.⁴⁰⁸

On about 5 October 1876, Sub-Inspector O'Connor, of the Lower Laura patrol, brought in five native troopers and a gin, who had bolted from Cape York four months back. They stated that they ran away because they were only enlisted for six months.⁴⁰⁹ As a result of the Native Police being engaged on community policing activities such as opening-up country and pathfinding, they were taken away from their operational duties of patrolling and keeping the peace. This hiatus in patrolling meant the blacks took advantage of the absence of the native police and speared four or five of the diggers' horses on the eastern Hodgkinson, which they then ate. The diggers were unable to follow them through the ranges there. With the arrival of Sub-Inspector Stafford and detachment, on business from the Walsh, he proceeded to patrol that part of the field. The miners were very much dissatisfied at the want of native police protection and complained Mr Sub-Inspector Douglas had been called away too often from the fields.⁴¹⁰ The above facts, once again

⁴⁰⁴ Brisbane Courier 19 April 1876 p 3.

⁴⁰⁵ Telegraph 22 April 1876 p 2

⁴⁰⁶ Daily Northern Argus 26 May 1876 p 2.

⁴⁰⁷ Brisbane Courier 18 July 1876 p 3.

⁴⁰⁸ Week 30 September 1876 p 13.

⁴⁰⁹ Brisbane Courier 6 October 1876 p 2.

⁴¹⁰ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 28 November 1876 p 3 & Brisbane Courier 20 December 1876 p 3.

refute the Black Armband Brigade's hypothesis that the Native Police were an exclusive killing machine with a single minded task of exterminating Aborigines.

On the Etheridge the blacks were increasingly troublesome, they wantonly destroyed twelve splendid horses belonging to Messrs. Martin Brothers, close to the town. The Gilbert River telegraph station fifty miles from the Etheridge was stuck up by them for the second or third time. The blacks numbered about one hundred and surrounded the buildings. Mr. Sherry, stationmaster, was intercepted between his house and the river, and narrowly escaped being killed. Sub-Inspector Armit started down the river with a detachment of police. The mailman from the Palmer to Cooktown was intercepted four times by the blacks on the road down, and he complained that protecting himself and his horses from their spears was getting unpleasantly irksome.⁴¹¹ On 9 January 1876, a son of Mrs. Anderson, whose husband had been blown up in the St. George a few weeks previous, was reported as lost, and being only two years of age, a great deal of excitement was raised among the townspeople. Search parties were out in all directions during the afternoon and all night, but failed to find him. Early on 10 January, Mr. Sub-Inspector Thompson, who had just arrived with the gold escort, kindly sent his two black boys to lend assistance, and a messenger having been despatched to the native police camp six miles away, Mr. Sub-Inspector Armit, with four troopers, returned with him in an incredibly short time. All day great anxiety was felt until evening, when the little fellow was brought to town none the worse for his long walk and exposure. He was found by the blackboys (having been tracked from near the town) seven miles down the river, and considering the indistinctness of the track of a boy of his age it was extraordinary the patience and acuteness they must have shown in following his footsteps. Great credit was also due to Messrs. P. Martin, Armit, and others, for the indefatigable persistence they showed in running the tracks, Mr. Martin being the first to see him, as it is extremely doubtful if ever he would have been found, or even lived another night, the native dogs being so numerous.⁴¹²

The *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* of 29 February 1876 reported "Dispersing the Blacks," from the *Etheridge Courier* of 20 January as follows:

"Sub-Inspector Armit returned to town on Monday evening, with his troop, after a very successful patrol. Between the watersheds of the Etheridge and the Einasleigh he came on a large mob of blacks on the Einasleigh water shed, about twenty-five miles from Georgetown, and succeeded in dispersing them, and drove them across the Einasleigh. He discovered their old camp of last year, in which they had erected bunks and humpies, and had evidently made themselves very comfortable during the wet season. It was very fortunate that Mr. Armit dropped on them so opportunely, as it will be the means of preventing their assembling in a large mob for some considerable time in that part of the country. A few more patrols before the wet season sets in, will put the quietus on our sable friends for the rest of the season."

No foreigner reading the above would suppose that it was penned in a country under British rule, and in which the law of justice is assumed to be paramount; or that Mr. Armit's prowess was displayed against those whom that law professes — hypocritically enough, no doubt— to protect. The 'dispersion,' it will be observed, was not undertaken in hot blood, as the consequence of some 'aboriginal outrage' which, however exaggerated, might have served to palliate the murderous work. It was simply a measure of precaution, in order to prevent the blacks 'assembling in a large mob,' and 'making themselves comfortable during the wet season.'⁴¹³

Sub-Inspector Armit arrived in Georgetown on 9 May 1876 after a lengthened patrol, which extended nearly to the Walsh River. He reported that the blacks were very numerous and hostile in that locality. They attacked the police on three different occasions; that, as a last resource, had

⁴¹¹ Brisbane Courier 22 February 1876 p 2 & 25 March 1876 p 7, Queenslander 29 January 1876 p 7.

⁴¹² Northern Miner 12 January 1876 p 3 & Queenslander 29 January 1876 p 7.

⁴¹³ Page 2, abridged.

to defend themselves with their tomahawks, having expended all their ammunition. They brought in a young gin, and a large bundle of spears, which they succeeded in capturing from the blacks. Armit reported that travelling on the road to the new rush was extremely dangerous; and all persons proceeding in that direction should be careful not to travel alone and to be well armed.⁴¹⁴ Several hundred blacks held a bora near Green Creek telegraph station. They attacked two detachments of native police, under Sub-Inspectors Armit and Poingdestre. Sub-Inspector Armit was at the boundary of his district searching for a deserter, when he was met by Sub-Inspector Poingdestre with the deserter, whom he had arrested. When near Normanton, they were without meat, and went out to procure game. While thus engaged they were attacked by a small mob of blacks, who fought most desperately, killing Sub-Inspector Armit's horse from under him and the other officer had a narrow escape. Armit saved a gentleman who was thrown from his horse when a spear passed the seat of his saddle. The officers stated that they had never previously experienced such determined resistance, and it was very dangerous to travel on the road to Normanton.⁴¹⁵ A large number of blacks visited the Havelock Camp at Finnigan's on 26 November and the people cleared out for the lower camp. Inspector Isley, with a detachment of native police, proceeded to disperse them.⁴¹⁶

Sometime in May of 1876, the black troopers attached to the Grey's Station Camp, under charge of Mr. Sub-Inspector Reginald McNeill, bolted to a man, leaving the camp to the head officer and the camp sergeant. The black rascals joined the tribes in the neighbourhood, and paid a visit to the Cape River rush. Mr. McNeill was not in a position to leave the station, until he got assistance from the officer in charge at Hughenden station, Flinders River.⁴¹⁷

Mr. Frederick Wheeler, sub-inspector of native police in the Clermont district, and formerly inspector in the Marlborough district, was dismissed from the service, and a warrant issued for his arrest, for having, with two black troopers, beaten a blackfellow to death. Wheeler was arrested on 2 April 1876, charged with the wilful murder of an aboriginal at the Belyando Station. He was brought up at the Police Court, 3 April and remanded for eight days, bail being refused. The two troopers who assisted to flog the boy were also arrested.⁴¹⁸ Frederick Wheeler was brought before the Clermont Police Court on 10 April, charged with the wilful murder of an aboriginal named Jemmy. The Bench considered the case was made out, and committed the prisoner to take his trial for wilful murder at the next sittings of the Supreme Court at Rockhampton, on 21 October 1876. The prisoner arrived in Rockhampton under guard and was lodged in the gaol to await his trial.⁴¹⁹

The *Queenslander* of 29 April 1876 briefly summarised the committal evidence as follows:

It appears that the deceased was employed on Banchory Station to tail sheep, and went down to the police camp on the night of 11 March, to look after a gin whom he claimed; he was there discovered by Mr. Wheeler, who accused him of being in the camp for wrong purposes, and had him tied up to the rafters of a hut, and flogged by three different troopers, Wheeler himself helping them; the latter took the boy to Banchory the following day, where he gradually sank, and died on March 15. There is no doubt about the flogging, but the medical evidence is not clear as to the actual cause of death, and it now remains to be seen what evidence the trial may bring out. In the meantime, the accused has been committed to Rockhampton Gaol, bail being refused.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁴ Brisbane Courier 12 June 1876 p 3 & Week 29 July 1876 p 16.

⁴¹⁵ Brisbane Courier 22 July 1876 p 5.

⁴¹⁶ Brisbane Courier 30 November 1876 p 2.

⁴¹⁷ Queenslander 27 May 1876 p 7.

⁴¹⁸ Daily Northern Argus 4 April 1876 p 2 & Telegraph 4 April 1876 p 2.

⁴¹⁹ Rockhampton Bulletin 18 April 1876 p 2.

⁴²⁰ Queenslander 29 April 1876 p 7. In a book of this nature, it is not possible to cover the full story of Frederick Wheeler.

In Chambers, before His Honour Mr. Justice Lutwyche, *Queen v. Wheeler*, Mr. Blake, Q.C., instructed by Mr. Macpherson, applied that Frederick Wheeler might be admitted to bail. Mr. Little, the Crown Solicitor, did not object to the application, but called His Honour's attention to Plunkett's *Australian Magistrate*, page 37. His Honour reserved his decision until 12 May 1876.⁴²¹ That morning (12 May) His Honour admitted Frederick Wheeler to bail, himself in £400 and two sureties of £200 each. Bail was to be taken before the Police Magistrate at Rockhampton.⁴²² Mr Wheeler applied immediately before the Police Magistrate, Rockhampton after the hearing to be admitted to bail was granted. Bail was given to Wheeler in £400, Mr. William Pattison in £200, and Mr. Hugh Milman⁴²³ in £200— these sureties being approved by the Attorney-General.⁴²⁴ The Circuit Court opened on 2 October 1876 before His Honour Mr. Justice Lutwyche, Mr. Garrick being Crown Prosecutor. Frederick Wheeler, late Inspector of Native Police, on bail, charged with the wilful murder of a blackfellow, did not answer to his bail, which was forfeited.⁴²⁵

The *Week* summed it up for all when it wrote:

Wheeler will become famous. Sooner or later, in one form or another, the birthright will appear, and according to the disposition of the recipient will be the elation or depression which will follow possession. This man's name will be discussed at the committee meetings of foreign missionary societies; it will touchingly illustrate the powerful argument of many an orator; it will cause a commotion at the Board meeting of the Aborigines Protection Society; it will doubtless be the theme of correspondence between the authorities here and Downing-street; it will excite throughout Christendom Unbounded, sympathy for the "poor black," and proportionate execration of the cruel and vindictive native police. This native police question will now be a prolific resource of literary as well as oratorical platitudes.⁴²⁶

There is no doubt that after due process and a fair trial, if convicted, Wheeler should have been hanged by the neck until dead. However, he escaped. Nevertheless, the Black Armband Brigade has latched onto Wheeler and in their scheme of things he has become living proof of the purpose and cause of the Queensland Native Police. As the editorial above predicted, much hyperbole has been written about Wheeler, although not a lot is known about Wheeler.

Sub-Inspector Carr, of the native police was transferred from Marlborough to Belyando Station, to succeed Sub-Inspector Wheeler.⁴²⁷ A murder by the blacks on Avon Downs was reported and Sub-Inspector Carr started with his detachment of the native police from the Belyando barracks.⁴²⁸ The *Daily Northern Argus* of 16 June 1876 editorialised as follows:

We learn with considerable surprise and regret that Sub-Inspector Carr and his detachment of native police have been removed from the station at Marlborough to the Belyando, and that the native police camp in that locality has been entirely broken up. What the authorities can be thinking of in resorting to such a course we feel at a loss to imagine, and can only attribute it to the grossest ignorance respecting the requirements of the district. At the present time there is no police encampment this side of the Mackenzie River, and as a natural consequence all the outlying country

⁴²¹ Telegraph 10 May 1876 p 3. Page 37 of Plunkett's *Australian Magistrate* [1866], relates to the granting of Bail to prisoners on remand for murder.

⁴²² Telegraph 12 May 1876 p 2.

⁴²³ It seems Mr John Stevenson, the member for Clermont substituted for Hugh Milman, LA Hansard 31 October 1876 p 118.

⁴²⁴ Capricornian 20 May 1876 p 331.

⁴²⁵ Telegraph 7 October 1876 p 2.

⁴²⁶ Week 8 April 1876 p 13.

⁴²⁷ Daily Northern Argus 17 May 1876 p 2.

⁴²⁸ Telegraph 1 July 1876 p 2.

including Rosewood, Yaamba, the Dee, &c., is left entirely unprotected. The Rosewood blacks are well known to be amongst the most lawless and ferocious of the aboriginal tribes of this colony, and as a case in point we need not go further than to refer to the recent murder committed in the former locality, an inquiry into the circumstances attending which is now being proceeded with. Since the distribution of blankets to the natives, it is a well-known fact that by far the majority of them have betaken themselves to the bush for the purpose of holding "corroborees," a very significant fact to old residents. The natural sagacity of the natives and the wonderful celerity with which any news more especially affecting themselves is received is also well known, and can we be surprised therefore if the fatal occurrence before referred to should speedily prove only the commencement of a series of atrocities that makes one shudder to contemplate. A more inopportune time for removing police protection from an extensive district like this could not be selected, and should disastrous results accrue the authorities will have themselves alone to blame, for the unwarrantable action they have thought fit to take without first of all thoroughly considering the possible effects of so doing.⁴²⁹

To the Editor, *Rockhampton Bulletin* 9 June 1876 from an Old Resident, Duaringa, June 7, 1876.

The inhabitants of this town and surrounding district are very much dissatisfied to know that the Native Mounted Police have removed from this district (Marlborough) to the Belyando. They (the blacks) were very bad some few years ago, and up to the time that Mr. Carr took charge of the district it was a very common occurrence for travellers to be stuck up on the roads, and requested to give up tobacco, &c. Now along the railway line men have to live sometimes away in the bush, and perhaps be compelled to leave their wives and families in a tent or hut for days. A general regret exists on account of Mr. Carr's removal, because he was always agreeable, and willing to do all in his power for the protection of life and property in his district; at the same time, the inhabitants were never called upon to witness any act of cruelty or excessive severity. Mr. Carr had a knack of keeping the blacks in thorough subjection without using any unnecessary violence. It is for this reason, as well as his own personal merits, that everybody in this district regrets his departure from among us.⁴³⁰

On 6 June 1876, a telegram was received from the Commissioner of Police authorising three troopers to be placed at Westwood and the surrounding district. In reference to the murder of Paddy Morris, Senior-sergeant Brannelly received a telegram from Sub-Inspector Collopy, who was still at Westwood with Mr. Beddek, C.P.S. The purport of the telegram was an order to send by the first train two black troopers, fully armed. The murderer of Morris was well known, and had gone in the direction of Clermont.⁴³¹ On 16 June 1876, the Commissioner of Police received the following telegram from Sub-Inspector Collopy at Westwood:

The blacks, especially some deserters from the Native Police Force lately stationed here, have been very troublesome lately. On the 2nd instant they attacked and robbed a man named Morris, who was travelling with horses near Westwood. On the 6th instant six of them, one armed with a gun which had been taken from Morris, stuck up a public house at Herbert's Creek, and took away a bottle of brandy. An inquiry has been held into the circumstances attending Morris's death by Mr. Beddek, J.P. and C.P.S. of Rockhampton, and Dr. Salmond. It was ascertained that Morris was killed, when asleep, by a black named Sandy and his gin. His skull had been broken across from the top to both temples by a blow. Sandy is not yet arrested, but is supposed to be in the vicinity of the Dawson, with four or five ex-troopers who have deserted.⁴³²

Sandy and Mary, Aborigines, were charged with having on or about 11 June 1876, murdered one Patrick Morris. Upon the application of Sub-Inspector Collopy the prisoners were remanded for

⁴²⁹ Page 2.

⁴³⁰ Page 3.

⁴³¹ *Rockhampton Bulletin* 17 June 1876 p 2.

⁴³² *Telegraph* 17 June 1876 p 2.

one week for the production of evidence.⁴³³ At the committal hearing, the Police Magistrate said that although Constable O'Reilly had sworn positively on both occasions when he was examined that the man in the dock (Sandy) was the same man that knocked him from his horse, and that he had seen him at Rosewood, still he (the Police Magistrate) did not feel justified in further detaining the prisoner, as four witnesses had testified that he (Sandy) was not the man who had been at Rosewood. He would, therefore, discharge the prisoner. The prisoner was then discharged. His Worship, on the application of Sub-Inspector Collopy, ordered a week's rations and tobacco to be supplied to Sandy. The gin (Maryanne) was further remanded for a week on the charge of assault with intent and larceny.⁴³⁴ The case of Sandy is an interesting one given the extreme and entrenched views of the Black Armband Brigade that all Aborigines were gunned down on sight because of their recalcitrant and worthless nature. Based on a letter sent to T. P. Pugh, Esq., Police Magistrate, by Mr. A. H. Peet, of Rosewood, Sandy appears to have been the first recorded Aborigine to become an opium user: "It would appear, that the Chinamen have been supplying Sandy, or the Gin with opium, or at least an opium pipe made out of an ink bottle. It is the craving for this drug which impels the man on to crime, but as he cannot do without it ... Sandy learnt to smoke opium at a gardener's near Westwood."⁴³⁵

In the local Police Court of Aramac, on 6 September 1876, John William Carroll, was charged with the murder of black trooper, Echo, aggravated assault on black trooper, Echo No. 2 and common assault on an aboriginal black gin. Prior to his arrest John Carroll was a Sub-Inspector of Native Police stationed at Mount Cornish cattle station near Muttaborra. Also, at the police camp were constable John Thomas, and his wife Mrs. Maria Thomas. The rest of the company consisted of black troopers and several gins. At the end of March 1876, at Aramac, Maria Thomas laid an information against Carroll to Inspector Armstrong, who took action which led to a private investigation and the dismissal of Carroll from the Native Police. Subsequently Carroll was arrested on the above three charges. Magistrates Edkins JP and Elliott JP held on the charge of murder that, taking into consideration the credibility of the only witness examined (Maria Thomas), and in the absence of her husband's testimony, they did not consider the evidence sufficient to justify a committal. They, therefore, discharged the prisoner on the charged of murder. Carroll was admitted to bail on the other charges in two sureties of £40 each, and himself in £80.⁴³⁶

In the nearby area of Nebo, the blacks had been rather troublesome in the neighbourhood of the Isaac River and Logan Downs. The detachment of Native Police stationed near Nebo paid a visit to these localities during February 1876, and "dispersed" a few of them. A number of opossum rugs were seized by the police, in return for the robbery of certain shepherds' huts.⁴³⁷

At the Police Court, Tambo, on 3 January 1876, Henry R. Dutton was charged, on the information of Sub-Inspector Towner, Native Police, with having, on 15 October 1875, at Tambo Station, interfered and obstructed him while in the discharge of his duty. A second information charged H. B. Dutton with having aided and abetted one Peter, a trooper, to desert. The evidence was as follows:

Sub-Inspector Towner was sworn, and proved that, on 15 October, he and his troopers tracked a deserter named Peter into the blacks' camp at Tambo Station. Upon his arrival again at the same camp, at 10 p.m., he saw the deserter running away. He sent his boys in pursuit. Immediately after, Mr. Dutton appeared who said, "Who are you, sir?" Mr. Towner replied, and said, "My name is

⁴³³ Rockhampton Bulletin 8 July 1876 p 2.

⁴³⁴ Rockhampton Bulletin 8 August 1876 p 2.

⁴³⁵ Daily Northern Argus 22 November 1876 p 2. Tried for murder; see also Rockhampton Bulletin 13 April 1877 p 2 & 14 April 1877 p 2, and Queenslander 11 May 1878 Page 185.

⁴³⁶ Brisbane Courier 30 September 1876 p 3 & Queenslander 7 October 1876 p 32.

⁴³⁷ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 18 March 1876 p 2.

Towner; I am a Sub-Inspector of Native Police; I am after a deserted trooper; I have just seen him, and have sent two troopers in pursuit of him." Dutton replied, "You are a liar; there are no troopers here; be off the ground; if I catch any troopers here, I will kick them off the ground; I never knew a good man in the force yet; they are all crawlers; it's a good job there are not many of them. I order you off the ground; where is your authority?" The Sub-Inspector said, "I am simply in the discharge of my duty." By the Bench: I should have captured the deserter were it not for the way in which Mr. Dutton interfered with me; he spoke in a very high tone of voice, and was apparently in a great passion. The troopers got frightened of him, and would not follow up the deserter. Two witnesses were called for the defence, to prove that the Sub-Inspector said, when meeting Mr. Dutton, "My name is Mr. Towner; I am after a runaway trooper." They swore that this is what he said with a view of showing that the defendant did not know who Mr. Towner was. The Bench were of opinion that there was no evidence to support the information, which charged the aiding and abetting to desert; but they were of a clear opinion that there was evidence to support the information which charged the defendant with obstruction. On account of it being the first offence known to them as having been brought before the Court, and as they believed that very few people knew that such a law existed, they would only fine the defendant a sum of £2 and costs; in default, the usual alternative.⁴³⁸

The Government removed the native police from the barracks on the Yo Yo to the Mitchell district. The people on the Warrego were of the view it was a hasty and ill-advised action to leave such a large district to the sole protection of two or three constables, as compared with the native police in pursuit of criminals, black or white, in country like the Warrego and its environs.⁴³⁹ Sub-Inspector Walter F. Cheeke, Native Police, in early November 1876 re-opened the Yo Yo Station, on the Warrego with four black troopers. The Yo Yo Native Police Barracks was said to be beautifully situated, and well adapted for a villa residence situated as it was 12 miles from Burenda township, and 40 miles from Charleville, on the Warrego River. The change of mind of the government to restore the native police camp was said to have been brought about by the local member, Hon. William Henry.⁴⁴⁰ The mailmen brought news from the Lower Barcoo that the blacks had been troublesome to the pioneers in that part of the district by way of spearing cattle and robbing huts. Inspector Armstrong started with reinforcements. The water holes in the back country were said to be getting dry, and the blacks were collecting in such large numbers on Cooper's Creek.⁴⁴¹

The conduct of Sub-Inspector Harvey Fitzgerald of the Burdekin Police Station in the Charters Towers district was brought into question over his conduct in the search and rescue of a young lad. Cobb and Co.'s groom at the Haughton (River), accompanied by a little boy, seven years of age, in service at Mr. Holmes' Hotel, returned there alive, after being lost in the bush for twelve days. It was alleged in the press of the time that Sub-Inspector Harvey Fitzgerald with eight native police, left the Haughton on a Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock p.m. in late February 1876, ostensibly to search for the lost ones; but at 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the following day he was at the public-house at Hamilton's Crossing (present day Clare), and when asked if he was not in search of the groom and boy, was reported to have said, "Yes, I was, and came on their tracks; but there was no use in following them up, they are dead now, and I have more important business to attend to."⁴⁴² Fitzgerald then involved himself in a rather unseemly incident involving a disorderly gin. A number of black gins had congregated at the telegraph station on the Burdekin River (Lower Burdekin Telegraph Station), and insisted on camping at the house. The station-master was away, and his sister, alone in the place, became alarmed as the gins positively refused to leave, and camped on the verandah. One of the gins was especially aggressive. The police being in camp a-short

⁴³⁸ Queenslander 29 January 1876 p 6.

⁴³⁹ Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser 2 September 1876 p 2.

⁴⁴⁰ Western Star and Roma Advertiser 4 November 1876 p 3 & Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser 2 December 1876 p 2.

⁴⁴¹ Queenslander 1 April 1876 p 26.

⁴⁴² Capricornian 4 March 1876 p 146.

distance away, the lady sent word of the disturbance and Mr. Fitzgerald attended the telegraph station, and ordered the gin to be taken to the police camp and whipped. It was said the gin took her punishment standing, and it was light. Then a white man interfered by abusing Fitzgerald and challenged him to fight. This being said in the presence of the troopers, Fitzgerald then thrashed the man in a fair fight. The Government granted a full enquiry into the facts of the case. Fitzgerald was ordered to resign; he did so, but after the inquiry, he was reinstated.⁴⁴³ Sub-Inspector Harvey Fitzgerald and his troopers returned to work at the Palmer on gold escort duties.⁴⁴⁴

On 25 July 1876 in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. McLean moved: That there be laid upon the table of this House, (1) A return respecting the native police force, showing number of officers admitted, number of officers retired, and number of officers dismissed. (2) Also, number of native troopers admitted, number of native troopers discharged, and the number of native troopers deserted; (3) and, in the last case, the proportion the deserters bear to the number of men in the troop from which the desertions took place. (4) Returns to be from 1st January, 1875, to 15th June, 1876. The motion was carried.⁴⁴⁵ The return showing appointments to, and discharges, &c., from, officers in the Native Police, from 1st January, 1875, to 15th June, 1876 were as follows: Number of officers appointed, 8; retired, 3; dismissed, 2. The return for native troopers was as follows:⁴⁴⁶

Native Troopers — 1 January 1875 to 15 June 1876

Location	Recruited	Discharged	Deserted	Desertion Rate
Warrego	1	1	1	1/6 th
Maranoa	5	2	nil	nil
Cook & Palmer	nil	6	10	1/4
Georgetown	4	1	nil	nil
Mitchell	8	nil	9	1/3
Bowen	15	1	3	1/5 th
Springsure	2	nil	2	1/5 th



⁴⁴³ Brisbane Courier 5 May 1876 p 3 & The Week 20 October 1877 p 20.

⁴⁴⁴ This matter is discussed at page 1363 of Hansard, Legislative Assembly of 19 October 1877.

⁴⁴⁵ Brisbane Courier 26 July 1876 p 3.

⁴⁴⁶ Telegraph 7 September 1876 p 2.

1877

On 26 January 1877 two packers, brothers, Hugh and Donald Macquarrie, left Edwardstown on a return trip by the old Palmer road. Another packer, named Ottile, left the next day. On passing through Hell's Gates, Ottile saw the camp fires of the brothers just at the foot of the hill, and on proceeding two or three miles further he found the remains of two horses on the road with papers and a pocket-book lying about. Picking these things up, and seeing the tracks of horses going along the road, he followed on to the Laura, where he found three pack horses and one saddle horse. These he brought into town, together with the books and papers. No trace was seen of the bodies of the unfortunate men. Inspector Thomas Clohesy ordered Sub-Inspector Connor to proceed to the scene of the tragedy with three constables and two troopers, who left Cooktown on 1 February. On 14 February, Sub-Inspector Moore, at Cooktown, advised the Commissioner of Police that the police search party had found the remains of three horses on the Palmer road near Hell's Gates, and, further on, came to a spot where the men were murdered and roasted. Some human skin and hair were found, and also some papers, possession of which was taken by the police.⁴⁴⁷

The blacks were ever present in the immediate neighbourhood of Cooktown. Their smoke signals on the hills to the north of the Endeavour gave an unmistakeable sign of their presence, together with spearing cattle and horses within eight miles of the town. A man named McCarey, who kept a dairy farm on the River Annan, a stream which flows into the sea about six or seven miles south of the Endeavour, had greatly suffered the depredations of the blacks. The loss became so serious that a constable and some troopers were sent out to check the ravages of the blacks. They were successful, for they brought back as trophies a bundle of spears and a young gin of about fourteen, and some fastidious people objected to the fact that their trousers were all stained and smeared with blood as they marched in triumph, leading the captive of their sniders through the street.⁴⁴⁸ The blacks were very bad on the Normanby Ranges. Many horses had been speared, and a large quantity of telegraph wire had also been taken by them. There was a great want of native police protection, and the packers were about to petition the Government for assistance.⁴⁴⁹ Then the blacks carried away about 350 yards of telegraph wire again, in the old locality, near the Normanby ranges. The line repairer, guessed what had happened and packed a coil of wire, fortunately, just enough to make the connection.⁴⁵⁰ For the fourth time in six months the telegraph wire was severed by the blacks, who appropriated some hundreds of yards of wire, for the purpose of making spear heads to slaughter their pale-faced invaders.⁴⁵¹

The *Cooktown Herald* reported as follows:

On 31 March, Charlotte-street was in a great state of excitement consequent upon a large posse of police and troopers headed by Sub-Inspector Moore, all armed with the Government baton, marching at double quick towards China Town. They were followed by a large concourse of persons up Charlotte-street, and on reaching the alleys leading to China Town, the police made a rush down the lanes into the gambling houses, where a general melee ensued, celestials were seized by their pigtails and handcuffed, coins, dice, counters, and all the appurtenances belonging to a "gambling hell" were taken possession of by the authorities, and the prisoners to the number of twelve, were marched down Charlotte-street on their way to the lock-up, attended by a great crowd of the curious. The police looked jubilant over the success of their expedition. One native police trooper, who had secured possession of two of the prisoners, to whom he "held on" by their pigtails, seeming especially exultant. Shortly after they were lodged in the cells, Messrs. Beardmore and Edwards attended, and

⁴⁴⁷ Brisbane Courier 15 February 1877 p 2.

⁴⁴⁸ The Week 17 February 1877 p 12.

⁴⁴⁹ Brisbane Courier 13 February 1877 p 2.

⁴⁵⁰ The Week 12 May 1877 p 12.

⁴⁵¹ Rockhampton Bulletin 3 August 1877 p 2.

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the former entered into bail for the appearance in Court on Monday morning of nine of the number, who were therefore released from 'durance vile'.⁴⁵²

Telegraphing from Maytown on 18 August 1877, Gold Warden Coward advised:

My camp has been stuck up and robbed by Chinamen during my absence on duty. £200 in cash was taken from the safe, and the safe itself smashed to atoms. My orderly was nearly killed. The robbers came prepared with ropes and tools. The orderly was lashed head to one post and feet to another. His hands were tied behind his back, a rope placed round his neck, and a bag pulled over his head. On receiving intelligence of what had occurred, I returned home to camp, got tracks of Chinamen, and took measures of the footprints. I then went to Stony Creek, and arrested one Chinamen answering to descriptions, and found four spots of blood on his feet; also arrested another who, I think, was the instigator. I came here (Maytown) late last night; Mr. Selheim is absent. Before the Chinamen left my camp, they told the orderly they would shoot me on their next visit — a threat which they have frequently made before. I return to camp to-morrow.

The services of Gold Warden Coward, of the Palmer Gold-field, were dispensed with, for harsh treatment of the Chinese. Mr. Lionel Edward Dyne Towner, sub-inspector of police was appointed Resident Warden at the Palmer.⁴⁵³

Mr. J. Williams stated that the blacks had speared eight of his horses, running on King's Plains, Cooktown district, five being killed outright and three rendered useless. He complained that although he had reported the matter to the police, no steps had been taken.⁴⁵⁴

A letter from Eastern Hodgkinson to the *Hodgkinson Mining News*, advised:

We have had a visit from the noble savage, and he has levied black-mail on us unlucky outsiders. On last Sunday morning, as Mr. Malcolm, of the Welcome, was going down the river to look after the horses, he came upon one poor animal lying dead on the track, speared through the stomach, and some 100 yards further two more killed and butchered most artistically, and on whom the black marauders had evidently made "bingie big fellow." On Malcolm's appearance, they scampered into a neighbouring gorge, doubtless with the intention of making a fresh raid as soon as the requisite "naboo" had been indulged in. There is hardly a horse on the river that has not run the gauntlet on some occasion; but this is the first time that wholesale butchery has been attempted. Surely our isolated position here ought to demand an occasional visit from the native police. During my residence in this locality (nine months), they have never, to my knowledge, patrolled this part of the river, and consequently the blacks, by reason of long immunity from reprisals, have come to regard us as their lawful prey. Goodness knows we have quite enough to contend with, living in this Ultima Thule, without having to relinquish work and follow King Mickey and his army of cannibals into their fastnesses, or else take a contract to supply the black hippophagists with an unlimited quantity of horseflesh. Whilst I write, their fires are visible from the camp, and I expect shortly that they will attack the camps if horseflesh is not procurable. A few months back they used to make descents on the creek, and kill far more regularly than the McLeod's Creek butcher, as Tom Kennedy, Dave Gregory, Christie Palmerston, and other outsiders can to their cost testify. Several fruitless efforts have been made by the miners here to protect their property from the ravages of those wretches; but they are so thoroughly cunning that they seem to have studied strategy in the school of some sable Von Moltke; and very likely when the whites are toiling and scrambling over the ranges in the hope

⁴⁵² Rockhampton Bulletin 6 Apr 1877 p 2.

⁴⁵³ Rockhampton Bulletin 16 November 1877 p 2 & Brisbane Courier 19 October 1877 p 2. The Week 6 Jul 1878 Page 20. Gazette Vol XXI, 24 November 1877 No. 97 p 1180 and Magistrate, Gazette Vol XXI, 1 December 1877 No. 99 p 1224.

⁴⁵⁴ Daily Northern Argus 12 February 1877 p 2.

of inflicting chastisement on the plunderers, those worthiest are holding high corroboree over the remains of what it costs the luckless outsider many weeks of toil to replace.⁴⁵⁵

On 29 June two Germans, prospecting on the Middle Walsh River, between the Etheridge and Cardwell roads, were attacked in their camp, and had a narrow escape with their lives. They were on the point of leaving camp on the morning of that day, when they were saluted with wild yells and a shower of spears, driven at them by a strong party of natives. One of the men received a rather severe spear-wound in the groin; but they were fortunately well armed, and after firing a volley or two from their Sniders the blacks gave way.⁴⁵⁶

Inspector Clohesy left Thornborough with the first Hodgkinson escort bound for Cairns, taking 1126 ozs. of gold, all for the Q. N. Bank. The gallant veteran was banqueted in grand style the evening before his departure, and thus, rewarded by two days' unpleasant trip, sliding down the greasy precipices of Douglas' track in pouring rain. He arrived in Smithfield on Wednesday evening, but could not cross the Barron, which was in flood, and had to wait till next day for Mr. Ingham's little steamer. Mr. Clohesy reported that everything on the Hodgkinson was hopeful and promising; two machines were hard at work, and three more, those of Messrs. Hornsby at Watsonville, Plant and Jackson at Kingston, and Forsyth's at the Tyrconnel, were expected to begin this week. There was no actual scarcity of provisions on the field; but packers had some difficulty in climbing the range during the extreme wet weather.⁴⁵⁷

At Cairns, on 22 February, before Mr. E. Morey, P.M., and D. Spence, J.P., a magisterial enquiry was held regarding the murder of three men and the wounding of five others belonging to the schooner *Douglas*. The following is the evidence of the master of the schooner, whose statement was corroborated by those of his crew and officers who were examined:

Thomas Harris, sworn, stated: I am a master mariner, and am in command of the schooner *Douglas*; my owners are Beaver and Co., Melbourne; I am engaged in the colonial trade; we had a crew of eleven all told, including myself and cabin boy; on January 8th left Trinity Bay for Dunk Island to procure firewood and dunnage; the first morning after reaching the island two canoes came off each having a native on board; they came on board my ship voluntarily; I gave them tobacco and other things; I also gave them to understand that they could come with the ship for eighteen months if they liked; they said "budgerrie," and three days after, just when we were getting underway, four natives came off (the two who had previously visited the ship) and two others; three of them were allowed to come on board; the other one I refused to take with us, on account of his treacherous looks; there was a license authority sent on board the ship at Melbourne, authorising me to recruit native black labour at certain islands in the South Pacific, or from the mainland, for a period of twelve months, to be engaged in bêche-de-mer fishing, or procuring guano; natives so engaged were not to exceed twenty in number; we were bound for a guano island, named Chilcott, which, with the Coringa reef, are the property of Beaver and Co., my owners; I believe the license under which I sailed was a general license, issued by the Governor of Victoria in favour of Beaver and Co.'s vessels; when the natives were engaged they were told they would get wages, and plenty to eat, and their engagement was entered in the ship's log-book (book produced, and entry read); that is correct; all it wants is my signature; owing to head winds did not reach Chilcott Island for about three weeks; arrived there, and commenced operations by erecting hut and discharging planks and barrels; I forgot to mention that we found the *Alexandra*, brig, also belonging to our owners, lying at the island, and about four days after our arrival it was decided that the brig should go to the Daintree to load cedar, and Mr. Beaver (the owner's brother), who had come with us from Trinity Bay, took passage in her to Cooktown, and I think he must have inadvertently taken our license with him, as I cannot find it, and have not seen it since then; the brig, I think, left on Tuesday or yesterday week, and during the

⁴⁵⁵ Brisbane Courier 19 July 1877 p 2.

⁴⁵⁶ The Week 21 July 1877 p 20.

⁴⁵⁷ Brisbane Courier 13 February 1877 p 3.

day she left our work went on all right; at night two of the men (Humphrey Coughlan and Alexander McIntosh) were left to sleep on the island, two of the blacks remaining with them; the men had no arms save half-axes, which they were cautioned to be careful not to leave in the way of the blacks; that night on board ship all hands turned in as usual; did not consider it necessary to keep a watch, all hands being tired after work, only one blackfellow on board, and the vessel half-a-mile from land with the boats astern; about mid-night, while the mate and I were asleep on the "lockers,"⁴⁵⁸ we were awoke by a cry of "Save me, they are murdering me;" I said to the mate, "For God's sake, get up;" he rushed out and I followed; the mate went by the port side, and when I reached the deck I met one of the hands (James Purcell), all cut and bleeding; I told him to go down into the cabin; he went down, but seemed half-stupid; I next saw a black following the mate with a raised axe; I sang out to him, and he turned round and struck at my head, severely wounding my hand, raised to guard my head; I immediately closed with him to take the axe, but could not succeed, so I made for the cabin, where I found Purcell lying in a pool of blood and moaning very much; the boy was also there; I tried to load a revolver, but could not on account of the wound on my hand; the blacks were then assailing the skylight with pieces of coal and the butt-ends of oars; with the assistance of cabin-boy got revolver loaded and fired several shots; some short time afterwards John Shaw came to the cabin through the lazarette, and said, "For God's sake, let me in;"

I assisted him in, and put him in the mate's berth; in the meantime, the blacks had full possession of the deck, cutting and hacking everything with the axes they had; about fifteen minutes to five o'clock a.m. heard a blackfellow's voice, and immediately afterwards the steward tumbled down into the cabin, unwounded; I gave him a revolver, and told him to fire at the black stationed at the skylight; he fired, and I believe hit the black, but did not kill him; he ran up on deck and put another shot into him, which killed him; I followed, and saw some of the crew forward; one of them called out "One of the blacks is overboard;" I looked through the gangway and saw a black swimming; I told the steward to fire at him, which he did, but can't say whether the fugitive was hit; I saw him land on a rock, and sent the boy to the maintop to watch his movements; next saw a sea take him off the rock; never saw him again; believe he was drowned; on looking around saw two blacks dead, and ordered the bodies to be thrown overboard; also saw the body of Patrick Troy, greatly mutilated; on mustering crew, found the others badly wounded, the mate and steward only being unhurt; I sent them away in the boat to the island to see how matters stood there; when they returned, they reported that the two men, Humphrey Coughlan and Alexander McIntosh, had been murdered in the hut; the mate stated that the bodies were much cut about the head, and that decomposition was fast setting in; but before sending the boat away again, I ordered the body of Patrick Troy to be wrapped up in his blankets and taken on shore to be buried with the others; the murders were no doubt perpetrated with the half-axes; those now produced are the weapons mentioned.

The other witnesses were — Daniel Deasy, seaman; Frederick Dowdall, chief mate; and Henry Fuller, cook and steward. Our correspondent further states that the Police Magistrate had everything in his power done to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded men. The use of a large building erected for a public-house, but not finished, was secured to do duty as a temporary hospital, and the services of a cook and nurse were also procured, while valuable professional skill was rendered by Mr. G. L. Rutherford, chemist; but it was deemed advisable to forward the worst cases to Cooktown, and three of the men were sent away by the *Blackbird* on Friday evening last. Captain Harris and another, only slightly wounded, are progressing favourably.⁴⁵⁹

Sub-Inspector Dyas, in charge of the escort, left Clermont on 21 February, for Rockhampton, carrying 1328 ozs. 10dwts. 22 grs. of gold, besides £4066 in bank notes, allotted as follows: For the A.J.S. Bank, 956 ozs. of gold, and £3384 in notes; for the Bank of New South Wales, 372 ozs. 10 dwts. and 22 grs. of gold, and £682 in notes. The escort was met at the Mackenzie by Sub-Inspector Collopy (accompanied by Constables O'Sullivan and Glackin), who took charge of the gold and notes, and arrived in town by train. They reported that the country as far as the Mackenzie

⁴⁵⁸ A chest or compartment on a ship or boat for clothes, stores, equipment, or ammunition.

⁴⁵⁹ Brisbane Courier 8 March 1877 p 3. Refer Maria incident at p 115 above, also see Invasion and Resistance Aboriginal-European relations on the North Queensland frontier 1861-1897, Noel Loos, ANU Press, 1982, p 129.

was looking exceedingly well, that the roads were getting into splendid condition, and that a large number of wool-laden drays were on the way down.⁴⁶⁰

About a hundred came forward to claim the gift, but the blankets on this occasion were white instead of being red or blue, a circumstance which did not add to their value in the eyes of the recipients. The distribution took place in the Rockhampton Court-house, Senior-constable Burke, the storekeeper, giving the blankets away, under the superintendence of the Police Magistrate. Every applicant received a blanket, and the numbers were—men, 42; women and children (or piccaninnies), 59. A few stragglers were supplied afterwards. There was a large concourse of spectators, far outnumbering the blacks. After the distribution, the aborigines were arranged in a double semi-circular line, or group, and were photographed by Constable O'Sullivan. On the conclusion of this operation, the blacks, taking a hint from Mr. Sub-Inspector Collopy, gave three hearty cheers for the Queen, and one for the Police Magistrate. The cheers were very like English cheers. A few years ago, it was "ur-ur-ur-uray," but now it is "hurrah, hurrah, hurrah," which indicates progress. The gins joined in as heartily as the blackfellows, waving red neckerchiefs, which appeared to be in profusion. After this they quietly dispersed.⁴⁶¹

The *Queenslander* of 5 May 1877 published a letter from Mr. W. C. Miller, of the Herbert River, on the depredations of the blacks; and of the inefficiency of the native police in repressing the predatory propensities of the natives:

Of three successive crops of maize, Mr. Miller lost one-third, one-half, and the whole respectively by these midnight robbers, besides losing a large quantity of cassava and sweet potatoes, and all his bananas. Not content with this, the sable visitors speared a milch cow at his yards, and so frightened the rest that they became unmanageable, and half of them had to be turned out. On two occasions Mr. Miller applied to Mr. Sub-Inspector Johnston, in charge of the native police detachment at the Lower Herbert. That officer came with one boy, and pleaded that as his men were all away with Mr. Sub-Inspector Day he could do nothing. On the second occasion he promised to send Mr. Day, but nothing was done. Subsequently Mr. Miller and a neighbour of his, Mr. Hull sent a requisition to Mr. Johnston to go and drive away the blacks; but he refused even to patrol the district on the plea that the settlers encouraged the blacks, a statement which Mr. Miller for his part denies. He avers that Mr. Johnston declares the blacks to be under the same laws as the whites; but that officer refuses to use anything but blank cartridge; and he argues that in this case the officer should apprehend the blacks, as would be done in the case of a mob of white men who took to roaming over the country, killing cattle and robbing plantations. He complains that the native police are too dilatory in starting on the tracks of the blacks when depredations have been committed, and instances the case of the Conn family, whose lives, he believes, would never have been sacrificed had Mr. Johnston started off on receiving Mr. Conn's requisition. Respecting this last situation, we are in a position to prove that Mr. Johnston used every exertion to get the Conns away before the massacre took place, and that he had repeatedly begged the Conns to remove from so dangerous a locality. Mr. Miller must surely know that Mr. Johnston did his duty on that occasion as well as it was possible for any officer to do it under the circumstances.⁴⁶²

Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy was appointed governor of Queensland on 20 July 1877 and served as governor until 2 May 1883, when he was replaced by Sir Anthony Musgrave.

The case of Charles F Browne, Sub-Inspector of Native Police was a curious one. Mr. Browne was accused by his superior officer of not performing his duty as he ought to have done—through having lost himself in the bush; and being told to send in his resignation, as he had served in the

⁴⁶⁰ Rockhampton Bulletin 27 February 1877 p 2.

⁴⁶¹ Rockhampton Bulletin 25 May 1877 p 2.

⁴⁶² Page 3. See also p 147 above.

army, he felt that when he was told to do anything by his superior officer, he was bound to do it. When Mr. Browne sent in his resignation, at the request of his superior officer, he immediately applied to have an inquiry made into the charges against him. Mr. Beor, member for Bowen, pursuant to a notice, moved in the Legislative Assembly: 1. That a select committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers, and leave to sit during any adjournment of this House, to inquire into and report upon the resignation of Sub-Inspector Browne, late of the Native Police Force, and the causes which led to such resignation. 2. That such committee consist of the Honourable the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Tyrel, Mr. Walter Scott, and the mover. The motion was lost.⁴⁶³

Charles F Browne then wrote to the *Telegraph* of 18 October 1877 as follows:

Having exhausted all other fair means of obtaining a hearing, and having spent over six months in fruitless endeavours to obtain justice, I now address myself to you, in the hope that you may find space in your columns for a few remarks touching my case.

I was in charge of a detachment of Native Police in Inspector Morisset's district, when I received an order from that officer to send in my resignation, dated March 2, 1877. My first impulse, of course, was to obey orders, and I did send in my resignation, trusting that, as I knew there could be no charge against me, I would be allowed a hearing, and obtain justice. On the contrary, I found my obedience has been construed into an admission of culpability; and it is assumed that by resigning, I have saved the authorities the trouble of giving me any explanation or investigation. Although I have made repeated attempts to obtain a copy of the charges brought against me; I have, up to the present moment, been unable to discover what I am accused of, or wherein I have failed to do my duty.

On 30th August Mr. Beor laid the matter before the Legislative Assembly, but, unfortunately for me, a more inopportune moment could not have been chosen. The case was hastily disposed of in a thin House, composed chiefly of Government supporters. The defeat I must acknowledge, but the judgment I cannot accept; nor, indeed, any judgment based on the unsupported assertion of an individual who entertains a strong personal adverse feeling towards me. I will neither tax your patience nor occupy your space with all the details that ought to be dealt with in another quarter, but that I have met with ungenerous, and, therefore, unmanly treatment, I can truthfully assert I am about to show.

1. Inspector Morisset's marginal notes in my report, dated 23rd January, 1877, betray a bitterly vindictive tone throughout. His intemperate assertions are entirely unsupported by any evidence, and yet incredible as it may appear, although I possess abundant favourable testimony, the authorities will not even look at it.

2. Mr. Seymour was so grossly misled by these marginal notes that he was betrayed into making a statement as to my losing myself and horses, that I now challenge him or anyone else to prove.

3. Papers most important to my case have been withheld. When Mr. Bell demanded the further correspondence, Mr. Miles, I believe, promised it should be laid on the table of the House. Instead of this being done, a portion only of the former correspondence was handed to Mr. Beor, and, at my request, Mr. Beor made a note of the papers still required. The missing papers were then promised, but, so far as I can learn, they have not been produced, and when I inquired at the Colonial Secretary's office where they were, and why they were not forthcoming, I was told that they had been "detached by order of the hon. the Colonial Secretary" Had these papers been produced and printed, my case would have assumed a complexion far more favourable to me and would have proved that, although I obeyed a peremptory order, I never ceased to protest from the moment I received it. To say that because I have resigned, I am therefore, not entitled to an inquiry, is a mean, paltry subterfuge. The Commissioner of Police is well aware that I had no intention of resigning until he or Inspector Morisset took the initiative step, and in terms that left me no alternative. But I can find an apt precedent in Sub-Inspector Fitzgerald's case.⁴⁶⁴ He was ordered to resign; he did so, and seven or eight months afterwards obtained an inquiry, and was reinstated.

⁴⁶³ Hansard, Legislative Assembly 30 August 1877 p 872.

⁴⁶⁴ Harvey Fitzgerald, see pp 165 & 166 above.

4. Nothing is easier than for those who are privileged to speak to bring false charges, and blast the character of an individual—especially when the individual whom they revile is not permitted to reply, or to bring forward any rebutting evidence (see "Hansard" 31st August). Mr. Miles' assertions are not borne out by the correspondence produced. I have always stated that I sought no special favour. I have simply demanded an impartial enquiry—no matter in what form—so that my case may be decided on its merits. I will not beg this as a concession, or as an act of grace; I claim it as the undoubted right of an officer and an Englishman. Why is this just demand not granted? Even the ordinary courtesy of a reply to my letters has not been extended to me. Would such autocratic tyranny be tolerated in any other English-speaking community?

5. The meanest criminal could not be condemned without a hearing. Yet I have been condemned on the bare statement of an officer whose vindictive hasty temper is well known. But to the proof, Inspector Morisset was not so long ago dismissed from the force for challenging to fight and assaulting, in a public-house, his subordinate officer. Perhaps the punishment the sub-inspector administered to his superior on that occasion weighed as "extenuating circumstances," and procured his (Morisset's) re-admission to the force. By way of contrast to the tyranny displayed in my case, I will proceed to one in which favouritism prevails.

One officer who has been suspended three times and dismissed from the force was reinstated some four years ago, and has been doing an ordinary constable's duty as camp-keeper ever since, while drawing an officer's pay. Will the Commissioner of Police explain why an officer who is only accused of seeming unfit for the service—grounds for such supposition not stated—should be summarily dismissed; while another, who has proved his unfitness on several occasions, should be retained? Here is the key. In the one case, the officer having no powerful relatives or friends here must submit to be crushed; it is thought he can be quietly ignored. In the other case the officer retained, enjoys the good fortune of being related to the Commissioner himself. Another triumph—they are becoming too frequent in the police force—of expediency over principle.

Here are a few instances of dismissal and resignation, followed by re-admission to the force after a longer or shorter interval.

Inspector —— suspended four times. Dismissed for fighting another officer in a public-house; reinstated.

Sub-Inspector —— ordered to resign for flogging a gin, and fighting at a public house; reinstated.

Sub-Inspector ——, suspended for being drunk and fighting with a sailor on board a vessel; reinstated and promoted first-class sub-inspector.

Sub-Inspector ——, suspended once; dismissed once: reinstated.

Sub-Inspector ——, dismissed for acting as a bailiff; reinstated.

Sub-Inspector ——, dismissed; reinstated.

Sub-Inspector ——, suspended three times; dismissed once for drunkenness; reinstated.

Sergeant ——, suspended, drunk while on duty Governor's escort, race-course; reinstated.

The above-mentioned cases are well-known in the force, and the records are, or ought to be, in the office of the Commissioner of Police; I only cite them to show that grave offences creating public scandal have been slurred over and condoned. But in my case, although I have given rise to no public scandal, and have never even been grievously reprimanded, I cannot so much as obtain a patient hearing. Inspector Morisset himself states: "There is no actual charge against this officer. (Sub-Inspector Browne) of misconduct." (See papers printed by order of the Legislative Assembly.)

The unworthy tricks that have been practised to throw obstacles in the way of my obtaining justice disgust and weary me. For instance, I have heard that it is stated that I never took my troopers on patrol without getting lost, and that someone was always sent after me to bring me back; that I did not patrol, &c. These calumnies must not pass without remark. The man who could utter such a base falsehood behind my back should, indeed, —to borrow the expression used by an hon. member in the Legislative Assembly— "be hounded out of the service." Had I travelled always on the roads at stated periods, and by certain fixed stages, I could not have been accused of losing myself. Perhaps those who accuse me do this. My practice has been never to travel on the roads if I could take the bush, and to avoid, if possible, going over the same ground too often; and in every district in which I have been placed in charge I have taken my detachment where my predecessors had not been. But because I am not seen on the roads, it is not known exactly where to find me in the bush, is it to be

taken for granted that I am lost? I contend that, with the slender means at my disposal, and the wretched old screws of horses told off to me, I have done as much work at a most trying season of the year, as any other officer could, and more than some officers would have done.

The unfair and unseemly behaviour of Mr. Miles towards me in his own office was not calculated to inspire respect for a Minister of the Crown; and I was as little prepared for it as for Mr. Seymour's cold, brusque reception. In my last interview with Mr. Miles, when I wished to show him evidence favourable to my case, he replied, "I don't want to see it." On my again demanding an enquiry he abased me for calling, and rang his bell, violently exclaiming, "Where is Mr. Rawlings, I will do any damned thing to get rid of this damned business."

From Mr. Seymour I have never been able to extract more than a surly, monosyllabic growl. But the affair has advanced so far that in justice to myself, I feel bound, in vindication of my character, not to let the matter rest, and as my case may be cited as an example whenever another grievance crops up, I now enter an emphatic protest against such a proceeding. As a proof of my sincerity, and in support of what I write, I enclose herewith copies of my papers. They will sufficiently expose Inspector Morisset's motives for persecuting me with such bitter animosity. Without attempting to bias your opinion, I may say that should you or any other unprejudiced person do me the favour to read the papers, you or he must arrive at the conclusion that I have been shamefully treated, and that I am the victim of a gross and cowardly abuse of power. If I cannot obtain redress, no officer in the force can in future feel secure in his position. I still venture to trust that such a dangerous precedent will not be established.

In conclusion, I think I have said enough to lead those who have the inclination, and whose province it is to consider whether it would not be desirable to institute a Royal Commission to inquire into the abuses which have crept into the Queensland Police Force, and to suggest the necessary reforms. That it must assuredly come to this is only a question of time. Yours, Charles F. Browne.⁴⁶⁵

Mr. Thompson in the Legislative Assembly of 19 October called attention to a letter in the *Telegraph* of the previous evening, from the late Sub-Inspector Browne, recently of the native police force. He had there made a direct charge against the Government, and he (Mr. Thompson) could not conceive why they would not grant him an enquiry. Mr. Miles, Colonial Secretary, assured the hon. member that he had given Sub-Inspector Browne ample opportunities for enquiries. If ever his patience had been taxed by any individual it had been by this man. He had had twenty interviews with him, and gave him every opportunity of bringing his case forward; but from conversations which he had had with him, he had made up his mind that the man was utterly incompetent to discharge the duties of a sub-inspector.⁴⁶⁶

In consequence of the large number of blacks assembled in the neighbourhood of the Daintree River, and who were preventing the cedar getters bringing down their rafts to the coast, Mr. Seymour, the Commissioner of Police, accompanied by Mr. Macrossan, MLA, left Thornborough on 3 December for Island Point with a detachment of police, which was to patrol the country lying between the Daintree and Mossman Rivers.⁴⁶⁷

The Report on the Police Force for the year ending 31 December 1877 had no real comment to make:

During the past twelve months nothing very important has taken place with regard to Police matters; but few offences, none of a serious nature, have been reported the perpetrators of which have eluded capture. Notwithstanding the alarm which was felt by many in the commencement of the year, no increase of crime has resulted from the influx of Chinese to the Northern district, where also the depredations committed by the aborigines have very greatly decreased, and hopes are

⁴⁶⁵ Page 20.

⁴⁶⁶ Hansard, Legislative Assembly 19 October 1877 pp 1361 to 1363.

⁴⁶⁷ *Telegraph* 4 December 1877 p 2.

Queensland Native Police

entertained that the means adopted for bringing them into more friendly relations will have a beneficial effect.⁴⁶⁸

Distribution of Native Police throughout the Colony 31 December 1877

District	Troopers
Cooktown	31
Cairns	28
Bowen	51
Blackall	27
Springsure	11
Georgetown	22
Rockhampton	3
Maranoa	9
Warrego	18
Total	200



⁴⁶⁸ Report from the Commissioner of Police for the Year 1877, Brisbane, 24 April 1878.

1878

Gold mining continued with febrile agitation in the North. A new gully was opened on the left-hand branch of the Palmer River and another at Isabella Creek, both of which gave remunerative employment to about forty European miners for two months. The rush to the Coen drew away nearly the whole of the European population from the Upper Palmer field and many of the Chinese were preparing to start, until they heard they were excluded from the new rush. The consequence was that a good many settled down in the Palmer district, with about 500 Chinese working old abandoned ground.⁴⁶⁹

The following report was published in the *Cooktown Courier*:

On account of the insufficiency of police protection, our stock is being from time to time killed by the blacks. On December 5, 1877, W. Qualters had five of his bullocks speared; December 8, there were eight more speared; December 11, they speared one belonging to Alf. Palmer, one to W. Qualters, one to H. Yates, and two to M. Fox; December 15, they made another raid, spearing two belonging to W. Qualters, one to Alf. Palmer, four to M. Fox, two to J. Yates and one to T. Roper. A good many of the above bullocks were very valuable in the teams. In reply, it was stated that a party of native police troopers were now available in Cooktown, and until other arrangements were made, would patrol, when required, the district in the vicinity of the Endeavour and Annan Rivers, and as far as King's Plains.⁴⁷⁰

The blacks had speared at least one valuable horse at Big Oaky Creek, about thirteen miles from Cooktown, on the night of 4 March. A police trooper and two native police "boys" (being the total available force at the disposal of the officer in charge at Cooktown) were despatched to Oaky Creek. Sub-Inspector O'Connor, with his troopers, were on the road down to attend the assizes. The teamsters and others camped or residing at Oaky, who had so much to lose by the attacks of the blacks, on 6 March, organised a party and started to do a little dispersing on their own account. When, as in Horsley's case, a hardworking man loses, at one fell swoop, ten or eleven horses of the average value of £40 or £60, he cannot be so very much to blame if he committed an indiscriminate slaughter amongst the blacks should he fall in with them. The Government had been persistently deaf to the demands to protect the property of the pioneers of the district. Notwithstanding the heavy losses of life and property inflicted by the spears of the blacks, and the inefficiency of the system to keep them in check, nothing was attempted by the Government to provide better protection, or to put an end to the vendetta between the whites and aborigines, and, it was considered that the blacks were far more dangerous and audacious in 1878 than they were in the first year of the opening of the Palmer.⁴⁷¹

The *Cairns Advertiser* reported:

James McCullum lived at the top of the range cultivating a garden and was otherwise engaged; he had quietly submitted to the constant petty thievery of the blacks, even to his glass tumblers, and was still giving to them what few articles of food or otherwise he could occasionally spare. One morning, eighteen strapping, tall, young blackfellows surrounded him, and demanded food. McCullum had but one loaf of bread, which he divided, giving his visitors one half, and making them understand that he required the other half for himself. Unbeknown to McCullum, Stephen George, a well-known packer that morning started early with his four laden horses up the range, and when he arrived at the top, not far from McCullum's residence, small numbers of blacks came out of different parts and got between him and his horses. They attacked him at once and after spearing

⁴⁶⁹ Brisbane Courier 22 July 1878 p 3.

⁴⁷⁰ Morning Bulletin 18 January 1878 p 2.

⁴⁷¹ Morning Bulletin 8 March 1878 p 3

him, they took the horses and loading into the scrub. George came running towards McCullum, with a spear in one hand, calling loudly, and exclaiming, I'm killed! and fell, completely exhausted. Upon examination, George's back was streaming with blood and it was found that he had been speared in two places. The first spear entered the left side near the lower part of the ribs and, although the wound inflicted was about one and a-half inches, he managed to wrench the spear out and throw it away; on perceiving which the black wretches threw a second, which unfortunately entered the right side about two inches and a-half. This second spear was the one he had in his hand when he came to McCullum's. George was taken to Cairns in a cart and placed in the hospital under Dr. Myers' treatment where he was recovering. A party of packers left Smithfield in search of George's horses and loading. They fortunately came upon the right mob of blacks' camps, consisting of thirty gunyahs or humpies, situated in the scrub near the second crossing of the Baron River. The camp contained about eighty blacks, including men, women, and children, who, upon the approach of the packers, were in the act of baking and devouring cakes of baked flour. The aborigines soon became invisible in the dense scrub and the packers were left to the business of their search. The packers found George's four horses, one of which was speared in the shoulder; they also recovered the full loading of two pack horses, and of the remaining loading of 3 bags of flour, some blankets and clothing; a 70 lb. bag of sugar, and 2 bags of flour having disappeared. As a further proof of the thieving propensities of these marauders the following articles were discovered distributed in the gunyahs: a quantity of twine, needles and thread, blankets, portions of clothing, knives and forks, iron buckets, tin dishes and pannikins, and a variety of tomahawks and axes; there was, also, a bag containing horseflesh.⁴⁷²

Patrick Downey, a packer, was speared by the blacks on 28 June near the first crossing of the Barron; one spear entered the calf of his leg and another entered just above the knee. Downey drew his revolver and fired two shots, which dispersed the savages. He walked seven miles with the spears sticking in his leg until he reached Grove's shanty, where he had them extracted. The two detachments of police were yet to respond.⁴⁷³

The first authentic news from the Coen, by a packer, was received in Cooktown on or about 6 July. About 500 men were on the field, working in a space of not over a mile along the river and in the gullies alongside. The blacks were very bad which kept the miners close together. Most were fossicking, and there was little to induce steady work. So far, the best prospect had been 4dwt. a day, and very few were getting that. The miners are complaining against the prospectors for reporting "payable gold." The distance from Cooktown is fully 230 miles. No teams have yet reached the Coen. Gold is worth 55s per ounce; beef was selling at 9d; flour 1s; tea 4s; sugar 15d. per lb.; boots 20s. per pair and brandy 15s. per bottle. There were no native police stationed at the site.⁴⁷⁴ Sub-Inspector O'Connor, who had recently paid a visit to the Coen, met with large mobs of blacks, who showed no hostility so long as they were not interfered with.⁴⁷⁵

On the 15 August 1878, the Macau men numbering about 800 and the Canton men, of whom there were about 500, had a "roll up." They were well-armed with guns and revolvers. A regular melee ensued, the Macau men getting decidedly the best of it. Two men were killed, and a large number of wounded, but it is uncertain how seriously. There were at first absolutely no means available for restoring order; but subsequently Wardens Sellheim and Farrelly, accompanied by Sub-Inspector Britton with a posse of police, orderlies and troopers, succeeded in arresting the ringleaders. These men were brought before the Warden on 19 August, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment each under the Vagrancy Act. The outbreak was said to be have been caused by a notorious gambler named Ah See, whose object was to seize and let out the claims of

⁴⁷² Morning Bulletin 8 March 1878 p 3.

⁴⁷³ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 2 July 1878 p 2.

⁴⁷⁴ Brisbane Courier 8 July 1878 p 2.

⁴⁷⁵ Brisbane Courier 22 August 1878 p 3.

the defeated party. This he actually proceeded to do, levying a charge of six shillings per head upon his infatuated followers for giving them possession of their enemies' claims.⁴⁷⁶

The following additional news from the rush was published in the *Cooktown Herald*:

Warden P. F. Sellheim and staff disarmed the Chinese at Lukinville.⁴⁷⁷ There was no resistance. Everything was comparatively quiet now. Large numbers of Europeans are passing down daily, principally from the Hodgkinson. The Europeans were on better gold, and the average was from two to five dwts. per day.⁴⁷⁸ Some are making at times an ounce a day, and a few are getting scarcely anything. Men should not come here if they expect to make more than £8 per week. Provisions on the field are cheap and plentiful. Business is not very brisk. Everything on the field is flourishing. The Europeans have their own township, and have set a line below the Chinese, and state that they will not be allowed to pass it.

On 8 August 1878, at the Native Police Barracks, Upper Laura, the wife of Sub-Inspector Stafford, gave birth to a daughter.⁴⁷⁹ In November of 1878, Sub-Inspector Stuart was transferred to Cooktown, to fill the place of Sub-Inspector Moore, who had been transferred to Townsville.⁴⁸⁰

The *Queenslander* of 7 December 1878, published as follows:

We are in receipt of a letter from Mr. Emanuel Borghero, the mail contractor who has been running a coach for three years between Cooktown and the Palmer, and who states that he has always delivered the mails punctually to contract time, notwithstanding the losses he has sustained through horses dying of ordinary disease so prevalent in the North, but also through horses killed on the very roadside and carried away by the 'poor blacks.' He says he has lost, in all thirty valuable horses worth at a low estimate £1000. At the time of his writing, on the arrival of the mail coach at one of the stages on the road, the driver found that the four horses which should have drawn the mail and passengers to the next stage had just been speared and carried off by the blacks. From a telegram dated Cooktown, November 28, published in our last issue, it will have been seen that six more of Mr. Borghero's horses have been speared by the blacks. His object in writing was to complain that the native police stationed there for the protection of persons and property travelling along the road are not so efficient as they should be. He says the blacks' visits are paid periodically, and that they are "looked forward to as you would look for the change of the moon." On this occasion the driver of the coach, in conversation with the sub-inspector of police, had warned him that the blacks were just due in that locality, and that officer had promised to keep a lookout for them. If proper measures had been taken, he believes that he might have been saved this last heavy loss. He thinks that the mode of working the force is capable of considerable improvement. It does seem strange that after the length of time this road has been open, and considering the great traffic there is upon it, travellers should be so liable to attack from the aborigines, when a detachment of police are stationed there specially for their protection.⁴⁸¹

Turning now to the Etheridge, the native mounted police barracks were situated on Sutherlands Creek, five miles from Georgetown and were at the base of a very broken, jumbled up granite dyke, from which a certain amount of moisture exuded at all times, creating bad water in the creek in dry seasons, which caused the camp to be very unhealthy. The officer's (Sub-Inspector Armit) quarters were very commodious, weatherboarded and roofed with iron, which was formerly a public-house, having been built when Mr. Sutherland's machine was crushing on the creek about

⁴⁷⁶ The Week 31 August 1878 p 12.

⁴⁷⁷ Town on the Palmer River Goldfield. Named after George Lukin, the Under Secretary for Mines. Alluvial gold was found here in 1878

⁴⁷⁸ Dwt. Equals a pennyweight, 1/20 of an ounce of gold.

⁴⁷⁹ Brisbane Courier 21 September 1878 p 4.

⁴⁸⁰ Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette 2 November 1878 p 2.

⁴⁸¹ Page 293.

200 yards away. The camp sergeant's quarters and troopers' huts, about 100 yards from the house, were models of neatness and cleanliness, the ground being swept all round the camp for many yards every morning. The detachment consisted of one sub-inspector, camp sergeant, and eight troopers.⁴⁸² On 29 December 1877, at the Native Mounted Police Barracks, Dunrobin, Georgetown, Elizabeth Euphemia Yeldham, the eldest daughter of William E. and Mary Anne Armit, aged 2 years 9 months and 17 days died of croup.⁴⁸³

On 1 July at Georgetown, an escort, consisting of Sub-Inspector Armit, Sergeant Breene, Constable Nobbs, and six troopers of the Native Police, left with 4600 ounces of gold. There were only two constables, one of whom was sick, left at Georgetown to protect the district.⁴⁸⁴ At the same time, reports were received that the blacks were within one mile of the O'Donohue reef, Charleston. Two horses had been speared and eaten and five were missing. There were no police in the district to respond.⁴⁸⁵

The *Brisbane Courier* of 20 July 1878 editorialised as follows:

Georgetown, 5 July. Last Sunday morning a proceeding unparalleled and unprecedented in the colonies was witnessed here—gold valued at £14,000 in the possession of five black troopers, that is to say packed on horses led by them, starting towards the coast. Besides these, there were certainly one sub-inspector, one sergeant, and a constable, and it may be that the treasure was sufficiently protected; but under what circumstances, especially so soon after a murder and other outrages, the native police are told off for escort duty is a matter which it is to be hoped will be brought before Parliament. Within the last two months I have more than once adduced facts to show what a rotten need to depend upon is this so-called police protection; but this last piece of mismanagement, the departure of almost all the white and black police from the district, is utterly disgraceful to whomsoever may have been the cause of it. I speak with reason, inasmuch as since the escort left the blacks have speared and eaten two horses (perhaps more) near the O'Donohue reef; have been seen at the old Vulcan machine site; and over the country in which the Canadian and other new reefs lately taken up are situated, fresh tracks coming from the conglomerate in the vicinity are quite numerous. Besides this no fewer than seventeen horses are missing about Charleston and the alluvial, and in Georgetown three days ago two valuable saddles (one new), the property of a gentleman from Normanton were stolen, with little or no prospect of ever being recovered. Why? because the police force now in this district comprises one constable at Georgetown, who cannot leave the town; one at Charleston similarly situated, and no native police whatever, neither officer, camp, constable, nor trooper, and, more than that, if there were, no horses fit to mount them. When is this infernal farce going to end? When will men, distributed over this country, be able to camp without the necessity of keeping armed watch for the protection of their lives, or travellers be safe when going from one place to another, or townspeople when looking after their horses, without being loaded with firearms? At present all the satisfaction we have is—echo answers "When!" As I said before, whoever is responsible for this state of things is a disgrace to the service, and, as a simple matter of justice, the sooner an enquiry is held upon the management of the police force, white and black, the better for all concerned. I speak strongly about this matter, and I am sure I echo the thoughts of every resident in this district; but after no notice being taken of previous facts, and more than that, after the miserable bungle made of the escort it is surely time to cry out.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸² Queenslander 19 January 1878 p 31.

⁴⁸³ Brisbane Courier 9 February 1878 p 4.

⁴⁸⁴ Brisbane Courier 2 July 1878 p 2.

⁴⁸⁵ Queenslander 6 July 1878 p 422.

⁴⁸⁶ Page 6. Refer to p 77 above, Ørsted-Jensen; while on escort duty, the troopers were not bushwhacking blacks.

The *Brisbane Courier* of 21 August 1878 reproduced Warden Hodgkinson's report for July as follows:

"The arrangements for patrolling this district are very defective; in fact, I know of no patrol since my appointment here. The consequences already have been loss of life in one instance, and the spearing of miners' horses close to the main camps repeatedly. This state of affairs is very depressing to the outside miners, co-existent as it is with the presence of a detachment of native police within five miles of Georgetown. I have repeatedly communicated with the officer-in-charge on the subject, who frankly acknowledges that the district has not been patrolled as it should be, and as the aggressive policy lately manifested by the blacks demands. I have been thrown entirely out of the contest by the wretchedly inadequate supply of horses vouchsafed by the Government. The Gilberton district, to which the majority of the Chinese are bound, is not, I am informed, under the charge of the officer resident on this goldfield; but unless arrangements are made for periodical and frequent patrols both of the Gilberton and Etheridge districts, particularly those portions lying in the vicinity of the main ranges, nothing is more certain than that there will be a repetition of the events of past years—a decimation of the Chinese, and consequent depopulation of a large area of alluvium."⁴⁸⁷

On 26 April 1878, a Spaniard, named Joseph Manuel Yous, but better known as Joe, was working with his mate, Thomas Ward, in a ravine on the Gilbert River, about a hundred miles from Georgetown. Ward was working on the opposite side of the river, 1½ mile distant from his camp; when he returned at sundown to find the ground covered with tracks of blacks, the tents pillaged, a gun and other articles of property taken, and no response from his mate. Ward being frightened for his own safety concealed himself during the night, starting at daylight for Georgetown, which he reached on 29 April and reported the matter to Mr. Warden Hodgkinson. Hodgkinson started with Mr. Patk. O'Brien, Ward, and his blackboy, the following day. When they reached Ward's camp on 3 May, they found everything as reported by Ward and, after a further search, the body of Yous, divested of clothing and charred by fire. While burying the body, Constable Nobbs came up with a detachment of native police and started in pursuit of the blacks.⁴⁸⁸ On or about 5 June, the police returned having succeeded after some difficulty, owing to the broken nature of the country (conglomerate) and the boldness of the blacks, in teaching them a lesson which they will not readily forget; not, however, without a casualty, one of the troopers being severely speared in the shoulder. A horse (half eaten), the property of the murdered man's mate, was found in their possession.⁴⁸⁹

On 3 September 1878, Constable Nobbs, in charge of a small detachment of native police at Gilbert River telegraph station, was found to be missing. His horse, with saddle and bridle on, returned to camp. Mr. Sherry, the telegraph operator, then made a search for him, but was unsuccessful. Grave fears were entertained that he had been murdered. The gold warden started an immediate search.⁴⁹⁰

In early November 1878, Mr. Sub-Inspector Stuart arrived at Cairns by the *Elamang* to take charge of that district. Mr. Inspector Isley relieved Mr. Clohesy at Cooktown, that gentleman being

⁴⁸⁷ Brisbane Courier 21 August 1878 p 5.

⁴⁸⁸ The Week 1 June 1878 p 11.

⁴⁸⁹ Queenslander 8 June 1878 p 294.

⁴⁹⁰ Brisbane Courier 4 September 1878 p 2. Constable David Nobbs to be acting Clerk of Petty Sessions at Cloncurry, Telegraph 6 November 1880 p 2.

transferred to Rockhampton.⁴⁹¹ Eight native police troopers also arrived by the *Elamang*, en route for Georgetown.⁴⁹²

In the Gulf country, about a mile below Magowra, west of Normanton, on an open plain a number of buildings were laid out near one of the lagoons of great length and of a horseshoe shape. This was the Bynoe Native Mounted Police camp, which was the basis of protection for the settlers for no less a distance than to the Queensland boundary west and Creen Creek east. The police station — consisted of the officer's quarters, a neat cottage horizontally slatted and thatch roof, constable's house, boys' huts, and yard — like most of the other camps it was kept remarkably clean, but being situated about two miles from the nearest timber, excepting a few gutta-percha trees round the lagoon, firewood was at a premium, the want of a cart for this and other purposes causing much extra labour and inconvenience. The gins, with wonderfully-built piles upon their heads, return in Indian file every morning from the nearest belt of timber. The detachment comprised a sub-inspector, a constable, and six troopers, with the necessary equipment. Upon the news of the murder of Mr. Batten reaching Normanton, Sub-Inspector Poingdestre proceeded to the Nicholson, nearly 200 miles distant.⁴⁹³

The *Brisbane Courier* correspondent in Carpentaria wrote, under date of 20 December 1877:

A horrible murder by the blacks has just been reported. The unfortunate victim, Mr. William Batten, was travelling with horses from the Calvert River, where with his partner, Mr. de Lautour, he had been mustering horses. The party, consisting of the above-named gentlemen, a stockman, and a blackboy, separated at Settlement Creek, about fifty miles west of the Nicholson River; Mr. Batten and the stockman Aitken pushing on for Normanton with about sixty head of horses, while Mr. de Lautour and the blackboy remained behind. Batten and Aitken reached the Nicholson River at daylight on 2 December, having travelled all night. On their arrival, they found a large number of blacks, amongst whom Mr. Batten distributed rations and several other small articles. The blacks then crossed the river, down which Aitken went about three or four hundred yards to fish. After fishing for about an hour he heard Mr. Batten cry out, and running towards him saw him on the ground, and six or seven blacks beating him over the head with nullah nullahs. Aitken fired a shot from a small Derringer that he fortunately had on his belt, which had the effect of bringing four of the blacks towards himself, and his next shot telling on one of his assailants, they all retired, after throwing their nullah nullahs at him, happily without effect. He found poor Batten with his skull beaten in, just alive, but insensible. The poor fellow continued to breathe for an hour or two, and when all was over, Aitken rolled him up in his blankets, and to save his own life had to start away for Normanton, which he reached after a lonely ride of eight days. From the fact that Mr. Batten's Snider carbine and revolver, though close to where he was lying, were untouched, it is supposed that he must have gone to sleep, and thus fell an easy victim to the treacherous savages whom a little while before he had fed from his scanty stock of rations. The scene of the murder is only about thirty-five or forty miles from the Messrs. Watson's station on the Gregory, from which station it is stated the murderers had been driven for spearing cattle. The native police have started in pursuit of the murderers, but will have to travel nearly two hundred miles before they get into their neighbourhood.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹ Mr. Thomas Clohesy, Inspector of Police, died at six o'clock p.m., at the Rockhampton residence of Sub-Inspector Collopy, on 10 January 1879. Clohesy was 43 year of age at death. Consumption was the cause of death, though his constitution was shattered from rheumatism and the dregs of fever and ague contracted in the rough life of his police duties on the northern goldfields. As a mark of respect to the deceased, his was given a military funeral and both companies of the Volunteers and the Fire Brigade attended. Mr. Clohesy leaves a widow and three children. Morning Bulletin 11 January 1879 p 2.

⁴⁹² Morning Bulletin 21 November 1878 p 2.

⁴⁹³ Queenslander 10 August 1878 p 587.

⁴⁹⁴ Page 5.

Early in the new year the government disbanded the Fort Cooper Native Police station, Nebo under the charge of Sub-Inspector Freudenthal and transferred the troopers to Bloomsbury, under the command of Sub-Inspector Nowlan.⁴⁹⁵ The removal of the native police from Fort Cooper provoked some discussion, but the reply given to the chairman of the Nebo District Association by the Under Colonial Secretary, who advised that the native police were to be centralised at Bloomsbury and the district patrolled as before, placated the district.⁴⁹⁶ Nevertheless, it was considered that the Government had made a great mistake by breaking up the Native Police camp at Nebo, as the settlers for miles around in that part of the bush were to be left totally unprotected. Mr. Freudenthal had been ordered to Georgetown and a detachment arrived in Mackay en route for Bloomsbury.⁴⁹⁷ The major criticism of the closure of the Nebo Native Police was that the district of Nebo and the roads to Clermont and Peak Downs were thus left unprotected leaving both the residents and travellers to the mercy of the aboriginals who were not yet accustomed to the blessings of peace and goodwill towards men. The Government had been requested to send back the Native Police. They answered in the negative, and stated that the Bloomsbury detachment was quite sufficient to patrol the district of both Nebo and Bloomsbury.⁴⁹⁸

The *Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser* of 22 May 1878 reported as follows:

During the absence of Sub-Inspector Nowlan, from Bloomsbury, in patrolling as far as Wandoo and Nebo, the blacks upon the Bloomsbury run commenced spearing the cattle belonging to Mr. William Macartney. This is a case in point which should demonstrate to the Government that the inland settled district of Mackay stands in need of immediate police protection, and that their action in removing the Native Police from Nebo was uncalled for. The fact that the aboriginals attacked the cattle upon the Bloomsbury run, not far from the headquarters of Sub-Inspector Nowlan, of the Native Police, shows that the district cannot be patrolled from that side of the district. The sooner the native police are re-established at Nebo, the better it will be for both the Police Department and the Government. When Mr. Nowlan left Bloomsbury, he had received several messages to proceed to Wandoo where the blacks were threatening; and while away with his troopers, the Bloomsbury blacks take advantage of his absence, and spear cattle almost within view of the police station? Really Mr. Seymour, your memorandum should be founded upon better information.⁴⁹⁹

On the second day of the Mackay Turf Club Races, the police under the charge of Inspector Morisset, Sub-Inspector Nowlan and Senior Sergeant Graham were present, but were not called upon to do much. Inspector Morisset, while in Mackay took the opportunity to fix the boundaries of Mr. Nowlan's new district, which extended to Collaroy on the South, Logan Downs on the west, Bowen on the north, and the head of the Broken river on the south-west. This was the district which Mr. Seymour asked the Bloomsbury native police to patrol by one Sub-Inspector, while the two adjoining native police districts were smaller, and these sub-inspectors were assisted with second officers.⁵⁰⁰ Since the removal of the native police from Fort Cooper, several complaints have been made respecting the conduct of the aboriginals. It has been suggested that the establishment of a police camp upon North Creek would be a great benefit to the residents in the Nebo district.⁵⁰¹

The *Cairns Advertiser* reported the following particulars of an attack by the blacks of Dunk Island on the ketch *Captain Cook*:

⁴⁹⁵ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 30 January 1878 p 2. Bloomsbury is 151 km north of Nebo.

⁴⁹⁶ Brisbane Courier 9 February 1878 p 7.

⁴⁹⁷ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 13 February 1878 p 2.

⁴⁹⁸ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 30 March 1878 p 2.

⁴⁹⁹ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 22 May 1878 p 2.

⁵⁰⁰ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 3 July 1878 p 2.

⁵⁰¹ Queenslander 6 July 1878 p 422.

The *Captain Cook*, owned by Captain Christenson, left Cardwell on 20 March, and visited the neighbouring islands, seeking bêche-de-mer; but perceiving logs of cedar floating, and several portions of wrecked vessels strewn along the shores, they made for Dunk Island, where they anchored about a mile off on Thursday evening of 21 March. Early on the following morning three stalwart blacks and two boys came off in a canoe, and having shown signs of amity, were foolishly invited on board, and food given to them, while the captain gave one of them a blue shirt. They remained some time, and gave the crew to understand that cedar logs and other timber had been washed on Dunk Island beach. The blacks left in their canoe, and sometime after the captain (taking a Snider with him), Williams, a third man, and a boy, pulled ashore. Upon landing they saw old black women only. All appeared quiet during a search of upwards of an hour and a-half, when it was noticed that six gins were endeavouring to haul the boat on to the beach. The party approached, when the boy perceived a crippled black crawl under the boat to lift it. While they were being driven away, a mob of blacks suddenly rushed from behind niches and rocks; conspicuously was one, highly painted, and wearing Christensen's blue shirt. The blacks counted 30, and a general battle commenced. One blackfellow aimed his spear at the captain's back, when Williams managed to save him; a second was thrown, and again Williams was successful, which enraging the blacks, they turned upon him. Christensen did what he could with his gun, and the man and boy fought hard for their lives; but Williams became a marked man, and in the melee, he received a cut from a wooden sword, four and a-half inches long, on the top of his head. Christenson, though receiving some bad blows, escaped scatheless; and the man and the boy, several times knocked down, were a not otherwise hurt. Upon the arrival of the *Captain Cook* on Saturday last, Williams was received in the Cairns hospital, and was progressing rapidly.⁵⁰²

A public meeting was held at Port Douglas, on October 31, for the purpose of taking into consideration the inefficiency of the native police as at present constituted, and to discuss the question of the best method of dealing with the wild blacks, who had lately caused such considerable injury to packers, settlers, and carriers between this port and the Hodgkinson. Mr. C. Blake occupied the chair, and explained that the object for which the meeting had been convened was for the purpose of discussing the best means for putting a stop to the outrages of the blacks on the Hodgkinson-road, more especially in the neighbourhood of Rifle Creek, half-way between the port and the goldfield. It was decided to forward a list of the outrages committed by the blacks in the locality, and to petition Government for another party of native troopers to be stationed at Rifle Creek.⁵⁰³

William Kelman of Brisbane, 31 May 1878 wrote to the *Queenslander* regarding his property at Jundah, Barcoo:

In 1874, I, with one or two others, requested that a detachment of native police might be sent out to the Lower Thompson, but objection was made owing to the scarcity of rations and difficulty in getting buildings erected. I offered to supply the native police with rations for two years at cost price, with 5 per cent added, and agreed to let them have the use of the buildings at Jundah, lately occupied by Mr. Tozer as his head station, on condition that Mr. Inspector Murray gave me a written guarantee that at the end of the two years the police would give up the buildings and would not have the place proclaimed a Police Reserve. I received no letter in reply from Inspector Murray agreeing to my terms, and the police took possession of the building and established a native police barrack. To my astonishment when I called upon Inspector Armstrong, the officer in charge of the district, in June, 1877, after the police had had the use of the building two and a half years, to inform him that I would shortly require the use of my buildings and land, he replied that it would put them out to find other premises. Inspector Armstrong then caused the place to be proclaimed as a reserve, and now holds my building and yards. I believe the reason given for making Jundah a reserve was that it is the best crossing of the Lower Thompson; but such is not the case, as there is a much better crossing about

⁵⁰² Brisbane Courier 6 April 1878 p 6. See Maria incident at p 115 above.

⁵⁰³ Brisbane Courier 11 November 1878 p 3.

four miles below Jundah, which Mr. Tozer can verify. All my neighbours out west (except two) think that the native police have been long enough in our neighbourhood, and my experience is that they are only of use as a frontier force, and then only when well officered.

I am now going to apply to the Government for £150 as compensation for the buildings and yards at Jundah, and I think it would suit the country better if that amount were saved, and the Jundah police moved nearer the frontier. In conclusion, Sir, I beg to state that it is in the power of yourself or any other person to search the Lands Office and ascertain the trafficking in country out west by police officers who have not one head of cattle, and who injure and retard the settlement of the country out west by bona fide squatters, and at the same time break the law, which it is their duty to enforce, by taking up large areas of country as unwatered, obtaining licenses, and selling at the profit, although the country is not only well watered, but good grazing country, and capable of fattening stock as well as any country out west.⁵⁰⁴

On the other hand, "Fair Play" wrote to the *Queenslander* from Blackall, under date of 18 June, denying the correctness of the assertion made by Mr. Kelman that all his neighbours out west were of opinion that the native police had been long enough in that district. "Fair Play" said that the junction of the Barcoo and Thompson rivers was the home of hundreds of savages, who occasionally in time of flood had proved very troublesome, notwithstanding the presence of the police. Should the police be removed from Jundah, he remarked, "it is hard to tell what might happen. There are a great many ladies coming into the district, and several to Welford Downs," which station, he added, was only thirty miles from the junction of the two rivers; and he thinks, very reasonably, that the lives of women and children should not be placed in jeopardy for the sake of humouring the caprice of one man.⁵⁰⁵

To round off the controversy, Daniel Budge of Gooyea wrote to the *Queenslander* under date of 7 August as follows:

In the early part of this year a memorial was got up, petitioning Commissioner Seymour against the removal of the police from Jundah, and that petition was signed by all the station-holders or their managers in this district, with the exception of two. So how Mr. Kelman can reconcile his letter with the truth of the case I can't see at all. I consider that the police are more required in this district now than ever they were, as the blacks are becoming more knowing and daring every day, and nothing but the dread of native police keeps them at all under control. Early this year (January) the very Carella blacks that Mr. Kelman says are so quite murdered two civilised blackboys who were stock keeping for Mr. Cory, of Tocal, and that within twenty miles of Carella head-station. Had the native police not been in the district to punish them for this crime, their next victim might have been one of the white stockmen or some unfortunate traveller. The blacks are a constant source of annoyance to myself and my neighbours, and we shall most strongly protest against the removal of the police for a long time to come. I quite agree with Mr. Kelman that to make the native police efficient they require to patrol their district constantly; but hitherto the Jundah district has been so large that we have been unable to procure a visit from the police as often as we should have wished. Sub-inspector Kaye, the officer lately in charge of Jundah, I have always heard spoken well of, and I for one am very sorry he has left. We always found him most attentive to his duties and at all times willing to do all in his power for the good of the district.⁵⁰⁶

Brandy, an aboriginal, on remand, was charged with the murder of Jane Sinclair, at Knockbreak, on 4 July 1878. Inspector Lloyd prosecuted. Mary Sinclair, deposed that she resided at Knockbreak Station, about 100 miles from Gayndah; on 4 July she sent Mary Smith and Jane Sinclair to the creek to wash some sugar-bags; I saw the deceased (my daughter) lying on her back in a hollow in the old bed of the creek; her clothes were turned up to her breast, and her body exposed; her

⁵⁰⁴ 8 June 1878 p 306.

⁵⁰⁵ *Queenslander* 13 July 1878 p 453.

⁵⁰⁶ 21 September 1878 p 786.

hands were closed and clenched: I examined the body; she was insensible at the time; found a wound on deceased's head, on the right side of the skull, extending from the back to the front, about, six inches in length; by feeling, found the skull was broken; obtained assistance, and conveyed deceased to the house; then removed the hair with a pair of scissors, but found no other wounds; examined the body, but could find no other wounds; my daughter died about half-past two on the morning of 5 July; she never spoke up to the time of her death; she was not sound of intellect from her birth; know the prisoner Brandy; saw him on the station at 2 o'clock on 4 July; the prisoner was the only male black on the station at the time; have not seen the prisoner from 4 July until now; I examined the body of my deceased daughter, and do not think she had been violated.

Peter Gallagher, a Sergeant of Police at Gayndah; visited Knockbreak Station on 11 July, in consequence of a letter received from Mr. Sinclair; from there he went to Nogo Creek, Eidsvold, about 60 miles from Knockbreak, and arrested the prisoner Brandy, charging him with the murder of Jane Sinclair; Brandy replied, "I did not kill her;" Gallagher said, "Brandy, I don't think you will go to-night;" prisoner replied "Baal me been run away from Sinclair's, but Mickey been tell me;" Gallagher then said, "What did Mickey tell you to run away for;" prisoner said he did not know; Gallagher told him to tell the truth, that Mickey was not there that day, and could not tell him to run away; prisoner replied, "I tell you the truth now; that day I been leave blacks camp and go along a creek for a drink; then I sit down along of bushes, at the creek; by-and-by Janey come down along little fellow boys; they altogether play about along water; directly boys go home, Janey stop behind; that fellow wash 'em along o' creek; have 'em clothes up along belly and rub 'em with towel; I been come up along; she say, 'Halloa, Brandy, what you want;' me been say, 'Come along creek to get drink;' she said, 'You go away;' I no go; she been swear at me like beggary, and call 'em names belong to me; I been say, 'What for call 'em name like that;' she been call me black devil, and she been throw stone at me: come over the side that Janey was; she been say, 'Go way,' and been call names along me; me been follow that one up, and hit her along a head with stone: that one been tumble down, and me run away; the stone all the same like tomahawk; the prisoner made the foregoing statement without any threat held out to him; it was free and voluntary; was accompanied by Constable McDonald, and he had an opportunity of hearing a portion of the conversation between the prisoner and myself; Arthur Sinclair was also present, and heard the greater portion of the conversation. The Bench committed the prisoner to stand his trial at the next Sittings of the Circuit Court, to be holden at Maryborough on 17 October 1878.⁵⁰⁷ Brandy, charged with murdering Miss Sinclair, at Knockbreak, Gayndah, was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.⁵⁰⁸

A sawyer, named James Arthurs, recently arrived from South Brisbane, was brutally murdered near Ravenswood. A magisterial inquiry was held in the Ravenswood court-house, on 19 July 1878, before Messrs. Barton and Becke, J.J.P. Arthurs came into town for the purpose of delivering timber and procuring rations. Having transacted his business, he left for his camp, about five miles out of town, where his mate was waiting his return. Arthurs was observed leaving with rations and a bottle of brandy. The blackfellows, Johnny and Jacky, well-known about town, were also seen a short distance from Arthurs, who was asking them to come over. They were eventually noticed proceeding in the same direction, but taking a roundabout way, with the view of intercepting Arthurs further on. The body was discovered a few yards in the scrub with frightful gash across the forehead, inflicted by a tomahawk, also a wound under the left armpit, right fingers cut, and other marks on the body, showed that a struggle had ensued. With the exception of the trousers and boots no other apparel was left. The pockets were rifled and a letter torn into fragments. A money order receipt for £5 was picked up by the police. The body had been lying for two days

⁵⁰⁷ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 3 August 1878 p 2.

⁵⁰⁸ Morning Bulletin 28 October 1878 p 2.

and decomposition had set in. Sergeant Griffin and the police scoured the country, but saw no sign of the blacks, they having gone into the ranges.⁵⁰⁹ The evidence of Sub-Inspector Thompson, the apprehending officer, was conclusive. Johnny, after the deed, made straight for Strathalbyn, a station about forty-five miles from Ravenswood. He appeared to have avoided the road and tracks, by traversing the ranges in nearly a direct line. When arrested, he was nude and in an exhausted state, clearly showing the fatigue he must have endured to reach the station. They accuse each other of the murder. Johnny, the last prisoner arrested, said they were all drunk, and that Arthurs struck him first, the blow knocking him down, upon looking up he saw the other 'boy' striking Arthurs with a tomahawk. They then both drew the man from the road into a little scrub, and covered him over with bushes.⁵¹⁰ Jacky and Johnny were tried for the murder of James Arthurs; both were convicted and sentenced to death.⁵¹¹

The schooner *Louisa Maria*, 39 tons, well known in Brisbane, owned by Mr. Johnston, timber merchant of Bundaberg, was bound in ballast from Townsville to Bundaberg. Her crew consisted of Alexander McIver, master; John Johnston, of Brisbane; and John Morrison, cook; a man named Andrew Walker was also on board working his passage. When Whitsunday Passage was reached the vessel became almost unmanageable through the foulness of her bottom. Thereupon Captain McIver determined to beach her on a nice sandy part of the shore of Whitsunday Island. This was successfully accomplished on the morning of 8 August 1878. Numbers of blacks were gathered round, many of whom spoke English. They were employed to assist in the cleaning, in catching fish, and in getting firewood, for which they were paid in food and tobacco. On 10 August, two blackfellows and a gin came over from Molle Island. They appeared to be very quiet, but suddenly the old gins, to whom they were talking on the beach, began yelling and rolling themselves on the sand. The captain then asked them where they came from. They replied from Bowen and that several blackfellows had died in the town. Apprehending danger from the increasing number of natives, the captain determined to finish as soon as possible, and get the vessel into deep water. The two blacks who had come from Molle Island left after getting tea; then all the rest shifted their camp some distance from the schooner. At dusk the captain, finding they were short of water, took the boat and two of the crew, with a blackfellow, to get some, leaving the cook by himself. During their absence a blackfellow and two gins went on board, looking for the tomahawk and axe and demanding food. When the others came back, without water owing to darkness, the blackfellow was nowhere to be seen, but the two gins were on board. Morrison complained bitterly of having been left alone, whereupon McIver promised to stay with him in future. They got the vessel off at about 8 o'clock, and anchored half-a-mile from shore. Next morning several blacks and gins came off in canoes, one of whom was sent with Johnston and Walker to get water. While they were away three full canoes came from shore, and six or seven men and some gins and piccaninnies came over from Molle Island and boarded the vessel. The captain, thinking they were friendly, did not try to keep them off. One fellow picked up the axe, saying he would cut firewood. McIver took it from him and threw it down the forecandle; then, seeing the boat coming, he rigged up tackle to get the water on board. While standing at the side a blackfellow came behind him, seized him by the back, and threw him clean overboard. At this time the cook was standing near the galley, and nothing further is known of his fate. As soon as Captain McIver rose to the surface, he called out to the cook to throw him a rope, but received no reply. The blacks then speared McIver with a bowsprit and handspike, and threw firewood and the sounding-lead at him. The last luckily missed him, and the sprit was ultimately the means of saving his life; for by using it as a buoy McIver was enabled to keep himself above water, being no swimmer. By this time, he had drifted out of their reach; but one fellow put off in his canoe, armed with a fish spear and

⁵⁰⁹ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 1 August 1878 p 4. QSA Inquest file ID348657, JUS/N58, 195.

⁵¹⁰ Brisbane Courier 20 August 1878 p 3.

⁵¹¹ Brisbane Courier 28 December 1878 p 6.

tomahawk. He cried out, "You b——y wretch, baal you giv'm tobacco," and drove the spear through McIver's cheek, where it remained sticking in the wound. Probably thinking he was killed, the black returned to the vessel, when McIver plucked the weapon out. In the meantime, the people who went for water had approached to within half-a-mile, and noticed the turmoil on board. The native in the boat became excited, and called out to those on the schooner, whereupon he was taken off by a canoe, and joined the others in their fiendish revels. Not seeing the captain or cook on the deck Johnston called them by name, receiving of course no answer. Walker then perceived McIver in the water about 150 yards from the ship, and picked him up quite exhausted after nearly three quarters of an hour's immersion. They stopped near the vessel in the faint hope that their enemies would satiate their desires and depart. When it was seen that the sails were put into the canoes, and the vessel set fire to, they left, steering for Bowen. Finding wind and tide against them, the course was altered for Mackay. Before they had gone far the cutter *Riser* hove in sight, and they were taken on board. Thus reinforced, they returned to the fatal spot, arriving there at 4 a.m. on 12 August. At daylight the master of the cutter and the men of the *Louisa Maria* went ashore. The blacks merely ran behind the rocks, from which retreat they jeered the whites, and pelted them with stones. Three shots from a revolver were fired at them, without doing any good. The mastheads of the schooner were visible, but not the hull, the water not being clear enough. Finding that nothing further could be done, they started for Bowen, where they were landed in their own boat on 14 August. It is said that the authorities will send a body of black troopers to the island to disperse the savages in the orthodox Queensland native police fashion.⁵¹²

The Native Police expedition to Whitsunday Passage, for the purpose of arresting the perpetrators of the recent *Louisa Maria* outrage, was under the command of Sub-Inspector Nowlan, assisted by Sub-Inspector Marrett, with six troopers and Captain McIver of the ill-fated schooner. Nowlan was at Nebo when he got Inspector Morisset's telegram to proceed to Bowen. He left Bowen for Whitsunday Island in the A.S.N. steamer, *Katoomba*, on 26 August. Mr. Sandrock added to the party two pilot boatmen, and also supplied a small whaleboat. The expedition could not land that afternoon at Whitsunday Island in consequence of a stiff breeze blowing in the Passage, and as the whaleboat was overcrowded with the party and heavily laden with rations. The boat was afterwards found to be totally unfit for the work of the expedition. On 28 August, the Sub-Inspector arrived at the scene of the outrage, and found the bows of the schooner appearing above water, about a mile from shore. He then landed and found the blacks' camp deserted; but he recovered some sails and other articles belonging to the burnt schooner. Later on, in the afternoon of the same day, the Police party crossed over to Leo Island, and after a minute examination, no traces of blacks were found. Upon the Sub-Inspector's return to camp, he was told by one of the troopers who had climbed the mountain that he saw the smoke of a fire in the distance. Mr. Nowlan instantly got his detachment ready, and proceeded in the direction of the smoke. He arrived at the unknown spot about 4 o'clock in the morning, and at daylight saw several smouldering fires ashore. The party landed, and soon came across the blacks' camp. Inspector Nowlan possessed warrants for their arrest, but when they saw the Police they fled like wild-fire over the island. McIver identified the blacks that threw the cook overboard and burned the ship, but all arrestment was out of the question. The Native Police pursued them in vain; several shots were fired at the leaders of the outrage, and it is believed that 'four fingered Johnny' and his mates were 'dispersed.' Several other articles belonging to the vessel were recovered. Determined to get hold of some of the aborigines to take to Bowen, the Inspector followed them over the mountains, when he again overtook them. A sharp fight took place, ending in the natives being dispersed. The detachment then returned to camp after dark. The boat furnished by Mr. Sandrock being so small for the party, a main camp had to be formed, and a party left behind to protect the baggage and rations, an arrangement which hampered operations very much. The weather proved favourable

⁵¹² Brisbane Courier 24 August 1878 p 5.

most of the time, or Whitsunday Passage could not have been crossed. Captain McLean, on leaving the party, told Mr. Nowlan not to trust too much to the boat, as it was so small and leaky. Several other islands were visited, but without satisfactory results. Some captured gins told the troopers that the cook was tomahawked, and his body thrown overboard. The cook's shirt, and also the watch and gold chain of Johnson — one of the crew — were found. Captain McIver spoke very highly of the energy, endurance, and courage of the Native Police under Sub-Inspector Nowlan. The expedition seeing that nothing further could be done steered for Bowen, where they safely arrived.⁵¹³

The following depositions were taken at the magisterial enquiry held by the Police Magistrate at Cardwell on 12 September 1878, into the circumstances connected with the death of two human beings, whose bodies were found by Sub-Inspector Johnstone on the mainland opposite King's Reef:⁵¹⁴

On 4 September, news of the wreck of a vessel supposed to be the *Eliza*, on King's Reef, was reported to Johnstone, who proceeded to Cardwell in the police boat and after taking in rations proceeded to the South Barnards, in close proximity to the reef; he arrived there on 6 September, and found the wreck on the 7th; on the 8th, he proceeded to the mainland to search for traces of the crew of the wrecked vessel. The troopers reported having seen portions of a dingy broken up. Johnstone returned again to South Barnard Island, as he had no anchor in the boat, and the surf was too rough to run the boat on shore; on the 10th he again proceeded with the search and found the bodies of two white men which had been buried in the sand, one arm only being shown above the ground; he exhumed the bodies and found the following marks of violence. On the larger body of the two, the left portion of the skull was smashed in, evidently with some blunt instrument; the flesh had been removed from the thighs and arms and the body opened; the man's complexion, judging by the colour of the hair and whiskers (portions of which he produced) was dark, turning grey; the second body, which was lying partly under the other one, was that of a man of medium size; the skull was partly smashed in, and from the colour of the hair and whiskers, he was a man of fair complexion, the hair being light brown, and the whiskers sandy; after having the bodies examined by a constable, they were buried close to the beach, and the site of their graves marked so that they could be seen by vessels passing; he covered the graves with the bottom of the dingy, and scratched on a zinc patch on the bottom thereof, "Two white men buried here by the police." Subsequently, Johnstone found other portions of a dingy (produced), viz., two bent knees, part of two stern portions of planking, and one paddle apparently for use in a dingy; the remains of the dingy which were left on the beach, were tarred on the outside, and the bottom boards on the inside were also tarred; the upper planks on the inside were painted red. Johnstone also found part of a clearance from the port of Newcastle, issued to "C. H. Welsh, master or commander of the *Riser* —; burthen; guns; navigated with (not legible); British built, and bound for Gul (supposed to be "Gulf"); the clearance form also contained part of shipping master's account of charges, also portion of official seal, containing amongst other letters, "— wcastle — Rser". Amongst other things picked up were, a portion of a photo of a man, with the photographer's name printed "Ludwig Brade, Bunurhaven;" portion of the fly-leaf of the by-laws of the Leinster Marine Lodge of Australia, — No. 266; the registry of the Grand Lodge of Scotland; a sou-wester hat, bearing marks of having been cut through by a blunt instrument, and traces of blood on the inside. The bodies were perfectly naked, and the place he found them in was a native oven; he found traces of fire under the bodies, which were partially roasted. On comparing the papers found with the name of the wreck, witness was convinced that the bodies and the papers belonged to the *Riser*. Johnstone found the papers produced, in the blacks' camp in the vicinity of the bodies, and he believed the men were murdered by the blacks. Johnstone was of opinion they had been murdered a fortnight or three weeks prior to his seeing them.

John Perry, timber-getter, deposed: On 7 September he was crossing King's Reef, and on seeing the blacks carrying up four or five canoes from the reef to the scrub, he, with others in the boat, landed and went to see what the blacks were about. The blacks cleared off on their approach; Perry

⁵¹³ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 14 September 1878 p 2.

⁵¹⁴ King's Reef is off Kurrimine Beach, North Queensland. See Maria incident at p 115 above.

went to their camp and found the ships articles of the cutter *Riser*, 5 tons burthen, from the port of Newcastle; C. H. Welsh master and the crew Matthew Taylor, 54 years, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, A. B.; and E. Nelson, 10 years, Norway, A.B. Perry also found in the camp part of a dark tweed waist coat, a light tweed trousers containing human hair of a dark colour, a pocket belonging to another pair of trousers, and part of a man's elastic-side boot, size No. 7. On finding these articles, the party returned to their boat and proceeded on their voyage to the Johnstone River. On returning to Cardwell, they reported the matter to the Police Magistrate.⁵¹⁵

The Police Commissioner in his 1878 annual report summed up the situation as follows:

The police expenditure is no doubt very great, and has increased considerably during the last five years; but it must be admitted that this is a natural consequence of the progress of the colony. During those years we have had the opening of the extensive and costly Palmer and Hodgkinson gold fields in the north, and a vast extent of territory taken up and stocked to the westward, far removed from supplies of all kinds, and where, consequently, extreme prices ruled. In the Cook and Palmer districts the horses had to be fed on corn at from fifteen to twenty-five shillings per bushel, and frequently in outside places, where corn was not procurable, flour at three shillings and sixpence per pannikin had to be substituted; the cost of rations for native troopers at same time being three shillings and sixpence per diem in excess of their usual cost in other districts.

In a sparsely populated country of such an extensive area as Queensland, it would be unreasonable to compare the proportion of its police expenditure to its population with that of any other country. Stations have to be maintained, some of them at enormous cost, whether the residents be many or few; the addition of three times the number to the population would add nothing in like proportion to the cost. The questions for consideration are—whether a reduction can be made without impairing the efficiency of the force; and, if not, whether the reduced and insufficient number would not prove more costly in the end? The portion of the vote for "Remount, &c.," which was available for the purchase of horses, has proved inadequate to the demand of the service, and a considerable sum is now required for this purpose.

The native police have been pushed out close to the western boundary of the colony, one detachment on the Gregory, and another on the Burke Rivers; but this is insufficient, additional detachments are required. I have endeavoured hitherto to meet the outside demand by transferring from the inside districts rather than increase the force. The camps formerly at Nebo, Conway, Yo Yo, and Blackall have been broken up, and it was intended that the Bloomsbury camp should also be removed, substituting, as in other places, a white police station with trackers attached. This, however, will not suffice now to provide for the wants of the West, and a small increase to the number of troopers will be necessary.

The complaints of cattle-killing and hut-robbing by the blacks along the northern coast, from Cairns to the north of Cooktown, are never ending, and never will cease as long as there are blacks there. The whole coast from the Mulgrave to the Mosman is studded with timber-getters and settlers, by whom the blacks are disturbed and prevented from obtaining their natural food in that direction, while on the other side of the range the country is all occupied by small cattle stations, which again cut them off from their hunting and fresh-water fishing grounds. The intervening scrub is small, affording but a scanty supply of fruits in their season, and the natives are thus literally starving, and take advantage of the cover afforded by the scrub to make sudden raids on the cattle and huts, which is rendered more easy by the carelessness of the owners, the huts being left unguarded and the stations insufficiently looked after. Too much dependence is placed on the police, and too much expected from them, the ordinary precautions that all persons should take for the safety of their lives and property being almost systematically neglected.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ Daily Northern Argus 27 September 1878 p 2. QSA ID348658; JUS/N59, 240.

⁵¹⁶ Report of the Commissioner of Police for the Year 1878, dated 4 February 1879.

The First Twenty Years

Distribution of Native Police State-wide for 1878 - Pugh's Almanac

Location	Magistrate & C.P.S.	Police	Native Troopers
Aramac		1 snr constable, 1 constable	1
Barcoo River		1 constable	5
Belyando River		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	8
Blackall	AW Compigne	Inspector Armstrong, 1 sub-inspector, 1 snr constable, 5 constables	1
Bloomsbury		1 sub-inspector	4
Booligar		1 snr constable	1
Bowen	P Macarthur	Inspector AL Morisset, 1 sergeant, 5 constables	1
Bowen Downs		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Bulloo River		1 sub-inspectors, 1 snr constable	8
Bynoe		1 sub-inspector, 2 constables	6
Cairns	Edward Morey	Inspector JB Isley, 1 sergeant, 6 constables,	5
Charleville	W. E. P. Okeden	Inspector Thomas Thornton; 1 sergeant, 2 constables	2
Cooktown	Howard St. George; C.P.S. James Pryde	Inspector Thos. Clohesy; 2 sub-inspectors, 1 sergeant, 2 seniors, 23 constables	5
Conway		1 sub-inspector, 1 sergeant	5
Craigie		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Cunnamulla	W. O. Norris	1 sergeant, 1 constable	2
Diamantina		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Dunrobin		1 constable	10
Edwardstown		1 snr sergeant, 1 senior, 3 constables	1
Georgetown	WO Hodgkinson	1 sub-inspector, 1 sergeant, 2 constables	2
Jundah		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	7
Kirknie Creek		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	7
Laura River		2 sub-inspectors, 1 constable	10
Lower Herbert		2 sub-inspectors, 1 constable	10
Millchester	C. S. Dicken; C.P.S. W. M. Mowbra	1 senior sergeant, 1 senior, 3 constables	2
Mitchell		1 senior, 1 constable	1
Nebo, Fort Cooper	C.P.S. G. F. Price	1 sub-inspector, 2 constables	7
Normanby		1 snr constable	1
Palmer River	P. J. Sellheim	1 sub-inspectors, 1 senior and 1 constable	7
Ravenswood	WRO Hill, C.P.S. W C Samuell	1 sergeant, 1 constable	1
Richmond Downs		2 sub-inspectors	6
Roma	John Murphy	Inspector J B Nutting; 1 sergeant, 9 constables	3
Saxby		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Springsure	J. G. MacDonald	Inspector Fredk. Murray; 1 senior sergeant, 2 constables	2
St. George	Thos. Mowbray	1 senior, 2 constables	2
Surat	R. T. Taylor	1 senior, 1 constable	1
Tambo	TJ Sadlier	1 sergeant, 1 constable	1
Thornborough	Wm. M Mowbray	2 sub-inspectors, 1 snr sergeant, 1 senior, 4 constables	15
Townsville	GW Elliott; C.P.S. W. H. Dean	1 sub-inspector, 2 senior, 12 constables	2
Walsh River		1 sub-inspector, 2 constables	8
Westwood		1 senior constable	2
Western Creek		2 sub-inspectors	12
Yo Yo Creek		1 sub-inspectors, 1 senior, 1 constable	5

1879

10 December, ushered in the twentieth anniversary of the colony of Queensland. After a long-protracted agitation, the districts lying to the north of Point Danger and the twenty-ninth parallel of south latitude were severed from the colony of New South Wales, and started up business on their own account under the name of Queensland. In 1859 the population numbered 23,520; in 1879, it was about 215,000, or nine times greater. In 1859 not more than one quarter of Queensland was occupied, and the greater part of it was absolutely unknown to the white man. By 1879, from north to south and east to west the whole of Queensland was available for occupation and most of it was held by pastoral tenants. The revenue of the colony in the first year after separation was £178,000; twenty years later it was estimated at about £1,100,000. In 1859 the pastoral industry produced the only export commodity. In 1879, gold, copper, tin and sugar trebled the amount produced by the pastoral industry. About £5,500,000 had been spent on railways. Every river and harbour from Brisbane to Cooktown was improved. A coast which twenty years before was almost unknown to navigators was lighted and beacons, and safely traversed by sailing vessels and steamers every day. In twenty years, Queensland had established a civilised Government, with protection for life and property, over a territory equal in area to half of Europe; lighted the ocean highways to its shores, and established marine police even on the islands of the New Guinea coast. Telegraph and postal systems reached every corner of the colony, and Queensland provided free education to all children.

In mid-February 1879, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Seymour, received a communication from Captain Standish, Chief Commissioner of the Victorian police, requesting that an officer of the Queensland native police and a party of black trackers be sent to assist the Victorian police in their efforts to capture the Kelly gang. The request was referred to the Colonial Secretary, who at once instructed Mr. Seymour to select an officer and men to proceed to Victoria. Mr Seymour selected Sub-Inspector Stanhope O'Connor, Cooktown district, and five black trackers together with native police constable Thomas King of Maryborough.⁵¹⁷ On arrival in Victoria, they were met by Captain Standish and taken to Benalla. On 19 March, Sub-Inspector O'Connor and party returned to Melbourne, after a protracted yet fruitless search in the ranges and that night, Sambo, a native trooper, died from inflammation of the lungs. Sambo was a notorious rascal who had committed every sort of crime, and had done some bushranging himself. Constable King had great difficulty in capturing him after his last exploits in the Wide Bay district, but managed to bring him to Maryborough, where he was tried and acquitted for lack of evidence. He was then induced to enter the native police force, where he was very useful in tracking. Sambo was a good fighter, and a splendid tracker.⁵¹⁸ The Queensland native police party were granted leave of absence, in accordance with clause 11 of the regulations of the Police Force and then volunteered to act as trackers. The sub-inspector and senior constable received from the Victorian Government double the rates of their respective ranks in Queensland and the troopers receive £3 each per month and free rations.⁵¹⁹

The *Hodgkinson Mining News*, reporting the slaughter and eating of three horses by the blacks close to Lyttelton, on the eastern Hodgkinson, said:

The aborigines are now becoming so bold as to approach within sight of the machine. Within the last two months twenty-four horses are known to have been killed by the blacks. A greater farce could not well be conceived than keeping up, at great expense, a native police force in this district for protection from the blacks. It is a sham, and the district would be as well off without a single

⁵¹⁷ Telegraph 3 March 1879 p 2.

⁵¹⁸ Telegraph 26 March 1879 p 3.

⁵¹⁹ Telegraph 19 June 1879 p 2.

trooper. The blacks have been incessant in their depredations, and we think we are right in saying that it is now many months since any part of the field was patrolled.⁵²⁰

Sub-Inspectors Little and Moore were removed from the north. Sub-Inspector Nowlan took charge of the Barron River district, and Sub-Inspector Carr of the Port Douglas district.⁵²¹ Sub-Inspector Nicholson was appointed to the Native Police Station at Bloomsbury.⁵²² The Colonial Secretary received a telegram from the chairman of the Progress Committee at Port Douglas, stating that the blacks were spearing horses and cattle within a quarter of a mile of the Native Police Camp. Forty head of cattle had either been killed or driven away and the settlers were in a state of panic, as the police troopers were disabled by rheumatism and other sickness. A reinforcement of police to disperse the blacks was urgently asked for.⁵²³ Emboldened by late successes and immunity from punishment, the blacks had been killing, cutting up, and carrying away the cattle and horses of the settlers around the Mowbray camp. Six cows and a horse, the property of one settler, were killed and not a hoof of the remainder of the herd, numbering fifty, could be found. Sub-Inspector Nowlan was out after the blacks for several days, and a party of settlers and others joined in the pursuit of them, but the wet and foggy weather, again favoured the escape of a larger number of blacks. Half a dozen was caught red-handed, and after the meat and their weapons had been taken from them, were pursued into the scrub. One blackfellow was carrying the hind quarter of a cow, probably weighing 150lbs. on his head when discovered.⁵²⁴ On 4 October, Sub-Inspector Marriot, six black troopers, and ten horses arrived by the *Egmont* and were stationed at Cairns.⁵²⁵

Late October 1879, the Commissioner of Police received a telegram from Inspector Stuart of Port Douglas as follows:

Senior Constable Halligan reports that the bodies found on the Johnstone River appeared to have been dead only a fortnight. The flesh had apparently been roasted and eaten by the blacks, who must have killed the men. One of the bodies had red and the other dark hair. They are supposed to be the remains of two diggers, names unknown, who were making their way from Tinaroo across to the Mulgrave.⁵²⁶

On 29 June 1879, senior-constable Splaine, stationed at Gilberton, received information from a party of Chinese that a large mob of blacks were seen in the vicinity of their camp, distant about twelve miles from Gilberton. Constables Splaine and Stubbs accompanied the Chinese to their camp, which had been ransacked by the blacks. Blankets, clothing, provisions, tomahawks, &c., were missing, together with a parcel of gold, worth about 80s., which was rolled up in a valise and put away in what was considered by its proprietor a safe place. Notice was immediately sent to Sub-Inspector Day stationed at Oak Park, about forty miles from Gilberton, who with his troopers patrolled the district.

Sub-Inspector Freudenthal, who had charge of the native police station of Dunrobin, six miles from Georgetown, and also the supervision of all the native police stations in the Burke district, has retired with a pension, after seventeen years' service. Mr. Freudenthal gained the confidence,

⁵²⁰ Brisbane Courier 15 January 1879 p 6.

⁵²¹ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 23 July 1879 p 2.

⁵²² Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 9 August 1879 p 2.

⁵²³ Telegraph 8 August 1879 p 2.

⁵²⁴ Morning Bulletin 14 August 1879 p 3.

⁵²⁵ Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 18 October 1879 p 3.

⁵²⁶ Telegraph 1 November 1879 p 2.

respect, and esteem, both officially and privately, of the residents of Georgetown. Mr. Thompson, who replaced Mr. Freudenthal, arrived on 16 August 1879.⁵²⁷

During the month of August, the "poor blacks" were amusing themselves spearing cattle, robbing miners' huts, and hunting Chinese from their workings. Clothing was also taken by them from a hut (Messrs. McLean and Haycock's) on Goldsmith's creek. As soon as the matter was reported sub-inspector Thompson, with the Dunrobin detachment of native troopers, started for the scene of the robbery. On 11 August, a man from Mr. Thomas Collins' station at Junction creek reported to the police magistrate that cattle had recently been killed by the aborigines within a short distance of the head station. Mr. Thompson being out on patrol, there was no native police assistance available at the time. On his return from Goldsmith creek and district, sub-inspector Thompson started for Collins' station. It has proved impossible for the native police officer stationed at Dunrobin to patrol this large district. What was required was a junior officer at Dunrobin, who would be specially devoted to patrol work. Mr. E. M. Geary, who was appointed junior officer at Dunrobin in January last, but who was "retrenched" in the end of June, did good service in that capacity during the few months he was at work. The site of the native police camp at Dunrobin was about the most unsuitable that could be selected in the district. It had only one advantage—namely, that it is near postal and telegraphic communication; but against this it has many drawbacks. Grass and water should be a primary consideration in the selection of a native police camp. In the case of Dunrobin this was lost sight of. The grass was poor and of bad quality, and the water was simply wretched—when there was any, which was only for about seven months of the year.⁵²⁸

In late November 1878, at Burke River, a native police station with Mr. Eglinton in charge was established, fifteen miles up the river from Goodwood.⁵²⁹ Then in early 1879 a fearful outrage by the blacks occurred on the Burke River when four men were barbarously murdered, and the whole of their property carried off. This incident was the first known outrage of a serious character by the western blacks. The scene of the murder was a creek, a tributary of the Burke River, about eighty miles from Messrs. Reid, Paterson, and Co.'s Goodwood Station (near Boulia), and seventeen miles from the camp of Messrs. Kennedy and Powell, at Northern side. The whole of the occupants of the camp were killed. Mr. William Paterson, writing on 1 February, said:

I am sorry to say that all Beckett's men have been murdered by the blacks, viz., Malvo, in charge, James Kelly, Harry Butler, and Tommy Holmes, and the blacks have carried away nearly everything from the camp, leaving nothing but the bullock dray and a few old saddles. From what I can hear, it appears that Malvo sent Tommy Holmes to Kennedy and Powell's camp, a distance of seventeen miles, about the 12th January to borrow some rations, but did not get any. Currie—the man in charge at Kennedy's camp—expected Malvo down in a few days, but as he did not come, he sent a blackboy up about the 21st January to inform Malvo he could get rations. The blackboy returned the same evening with the news that all hands were killed! A man was at once despatched for the native police, but they had unfortunately started a few days previous for the Herbert⁵³⁰ to search for McCoy, who is reported missing. In the absence of the police we made up a party here, and started up to the scene of the murder; as we were afraid the blacks would attack Kennedy's camp and other camps on Will's Creek. When we got to Malvo's camp, we found the remains of the murdered men, strewn about in the waterhole, and everything gone. After burying the remains, we started in pursuit of the blacks to try and recover some of the property, but we did not get anything of any great value. We saw several

⁵²⁷ *Queenslander* 16 August 1879 p 199.

⁵²⁸ *Brisbane Courier* 30 August 1879 p 6.

⁵²⁹ *Queenslander* 18 January 1879 p 70.

⁵³⁰ There were two Herbert rivers at the time and were a constant source of confusion to the public. The Herbert which sleeps for years as an inactive chain of waterholes is found in the Far West; but the northern Herbert, a perennially running stream is found in the Ingham district. *Brisbane Courier* 5 March 1879 p 2.

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camps where the blacks have been lately, and got some of Malvo's letters in every camp. Malvo had a young blackfellow in his camp named Charcoal, and there is no doubt that he was acting as a spy and was in communication with the wild blacks. We could not ascertain how Malvo and his men were killed, but I think they were killed away from the tents, some time through the day. Very likely some were bathing, and others fishing, and the blacks had got between them and the tents. Mr. Paterson also adds that the blacks made an attack on Sheaff's camp about a fortnight after they killed Malvo's men, but a blackboy heard them coming up and gave the alarm.⁵³¹

On 1 February 1879, Pioneer of Eyre's Creek, Lower Herbert, wrote to the Editor of the *Brisbane Courier* as follows:

Since this portion of the district has been settled, in September 1877, we have had but one visit from the police, viz., in August 1878, when Sub-Inspector Eglington was down on patrol. The police at that time were stationed somewhere on the Diamantina above Cork station, but I see in your issue of December 7th (under "Notes from the Far West" by "Outsider") that Sub-Inspector Eglington has since been removed to near Goodwood Station, on the Burke River. At either of these places in the present state of the country, they can be of little service to this portion of the district, as when the blacks are most troublesome then it happens that we can least spare men to go for the police. Two white men have been treacherously murdered by the blacks during the last two months; the first victim, a cook in the employ of Mr. Howie, on his Coorengila station, Lower Diamantina, met his sad fate in December. No doubt you will have had particulars from other sources long before this reaches you. The second was a stockman named Thomas Patterson, in the employ of Messrs. Urquhart and Fraser, on this river, who was surrounded and killed at a waterhole seven miles from their home station on Friday, January 17. The following particulars are from a blackboy who was with him when the blacks attacked him, and from Mr. Urquhart, who found his body soon after the murder. The unfortunate man left the home station that morning with a blackboy to go round the tracks of his cattle, and about the middle of the day stopped to have dinner at the waterhole where he was murdered. The boy says they had boiled their quart pots and were eating their dinner when two blackfellows, apparently unarmed, came up to them. When close to them they pulled out their nullah nullahs from behind their backs, where they had them stuck in their belts; one had struck the white man on the head, and the other the black boy, when a large mob of blacks, who had been planted in the lignum close to the waterhole, rushed out, armed with spears, &c., to their assistance, and surrounded the white man. The blackboy made his escape on foot, the two horses having broken their bridles and made off homewards. When running away the boy says he heard three shots fired. Mr. Urquhart, who must have been close to the place at the time, driving a mob of cattle in to the water, heard the shots also, but mistook them for the crack of a stockwhip, and answered them by cracking his whip. On arriving at the water he saw a number of blacks amongst the lignum, who made off when he approached them, and soon after he found the body of his poor stockman, Thomas Patterson, fearfully mutilated, being pierced all over with spears, some of which were broken off and left in the body, his head also being battered in with tomahawks. Mr. Urquhart having procured assistance from the station had the body taken home and decently interred. No reason can be assigned for this cowardly outrage. The deceased was a quiet respectable young man, and universally esteemed. Judging from the number of tracks, there must have been at least forty or fifty blacks concerned in the murder. Notice was sent to the police by two travellers who happened to be going up the river to Mr. Campbell's, Curtaboora station, about a week after this occurrence, but it will be many weeks perhaps before it reaches them. What we require is, that the police be stationed either near Curtaboora, on the Herbert, or lower down the Diamantina, say 150 miles north of the South Australian border, they will then be in the centre of a district where the blacks are not only numerous but inclined (if not checked) to be destructive to both life and property.⁵³²

⁵³¹ Morning Bulletin 1 March 1879 p 3.

⁵³² Brisbane Courier 5 April 1879 p 5.

Burke River, the *Morning Bulletin* of 6 June 1879 reported as follows:

A stockman on Connemara (Mr. de Burgh Persse) has been murdered. The native police have been sent for, but their equipment is so defective that it is very doubtful whether they will be able to inflict adequate punishment on the culprits. As far as we can learn the detachment stationed on the Burke is as ill provided as any in the colony. The five troopers have one rifle among them. They had two, but one was accidentally destroyed by fire. Their horses are very bad—not capable of making an ordinary journey, and quite unfit to follow blacks' tracks over the unwatered plains of the interior. Furthermore, they are unshod, and consequently useless in the ranges. Thus, armed and mounted, the Burke troopers have to protect not only the country watered by that river, but also Wills' Creek, the Hamilton, five hundred miles of the Herbert, and the Lower Mulligan. It is obviously impossible for a detachment so equipped to protect such a district even in a remote sense of the word. If the detachment had proper arms and horses it could keep the peace in the whole of the district, except perhaps the lower Herbert and Mulligan, to patrol which properly would necessitate an increase of the force. Of this the blacks are fully aware; hence such murders as that of the poor Connemara stockman and those of Wills Creek.⁵³³

The *Western Star and Roma Advertiser* of 14 August 1879 lambasted the Native Police as follows:

The services of Sub-Inspector Moran, of the Mount Cornish Native Police, has been dispensed with by the Government. I trust to hear of many other useless and costly establishments in the same department meeting a like fate. It is high time the over-taxed ratepayers of the colony got a little relief from supporting useless and over-paid police officers, who were good for nothing, or did nothing, but draw their salaries. I hope to hear of the whole Native Police force being dispensed with. I have, on more than one occasion in these columns of your journal, stated my reasons why Native Police officers should not be placed over white police. When the forces meet, say at a race meeting in the interior, the Native Police officer, instead of assisting a constable in the discharge of his duty, is himself the rowdiest of the rowdy. This may be attributable to the fact that Native Police officers are recruited from the ranks of seedy swells, station loafers, "hotel aristocrats," and under-strappers at wash pools and woodsheds during shearing operations. Think of placing a Native Police official over the heads of such well-known men of ability as Sub-Inspectors Ahern and Dyas, of Blackall and Clermont, respectively. These are the gentlemen that I trust the Government will dispense with, and not the hard-worked and poorly paid men of the ranks, from the senior-sergeant to the constable, from whom the industrious settlers expect protection for life and property. If the Government are sincere in their desire to reduce the police force, I trust they will commence with Mr. Commissioner of Police himself, as there is no one more thoroughly aware of the fact than the present Colonial Secretary that the sole duties of the Commissioner of Police has for years been performed by Mr. Barron. The promotion of Mr. Barron would not be alone a gain to the police force, but to the taxpayer as well.⁵³⁴

The cutter *Prospect*, which cleared the Herbert River, about mid-February 1879, had a very narrow escape from being captured by the blacks, and her commander, Captain Dunscombe, and his mate murdered. It appears that the little vessel put into Hinchinbrook Island for the purpose of taking on board a supply of fire wood. The place at which the *Prospect* anchored was a nice open beach, and everything having been made safe, her crew went on shore to obtain what they wanted. During the afternoon two blacks went off in a canoe to the vessel, taking a Cape Pigeon with them, which they exchanged with those on board for a knife, and then left again for the shore, not being allowed to board the vessel. Making everything snug on board, Dunscombe and his mate came to the conclusion that they would take a nap about five o'clock in the evening, so that they would be in readiness to proceed upon their voyage to Cooktown about midnight. They accordingly turned in, Dunscombe hanging a shirt over the hatchway to prevent the rain, which was beginning to

⁵³³ Page 2.

⁵³⁴ Page 3.

sprinkle, coming down upon them. He was just dozing off, when his attention was attracted by a noise on deck. Perceiving also that the shirt was not where he left it, he raised his head above the hatchway; but no sooner had he done so than whack came a blackfellow's club upon it, causing him to retreat below again. Possibly the blow would have disabled him, had it not been that the club in descending stuck the hatchway first, thereby lessening the violence of the blow. With an exclamation more forcible than polite to his mate that the sanguinary blacks were upon them, they made search for their rifles and ammunition; the unwelcome visitors retaining possession of the deck for about an hour and a-half, whilst they were being shot at from down below by the inmates who were only enabled to fire at hazard. The blacks rapped the skylight with their clubs as if to challenge those below to show themselves, an invitation, however, they very wisely declined to avail themselves of. At length, however, Dunscombe did venture to raise his head, when he found to his great relief that his uninvited visitors had departed, but not without plundering a dingy. The anchor was weighed and the vessel was put about for Cardwell to obtain assistance in recovering the dingy. Constant firing of the rifles was kept up between the island and Cardwell with the view of attracting attention, but without success, and on arriving at Cardwell, Dunscombe reported the matter to the Police Magistrate, at the same time asking why their signals had not been answered, and was met with the rejoinder that it was presumed the shots were fired by a party pigeon shooting. A boat's crew, however, was subsequently obtained, and returned to the island, in an endeavour to re-capture the dingy, but without success; the blacks being once seen going round a point with it, but on reaching the locality, nothing was then visible either of the boat or of them. Under the circumstances, Dunscombe thought it better to sail to Cooktown. On reaching Cooktown, much sympathy was felt for him, as the humanity displayed by Captain Dunscombe to shipwrecked crews and others in misfortune was proverbial.⁵³⁵

On 2 November 1878, two brothers named Kennedy reported to the authorities that whilst travelling over from the Johnstone river to Cardwell they were attacked at Tam O'Shanter Point, when in camp, by a mob of forty male blacks, who dispossessed them of everything, speared one horse and drove away five others, besides striking one of them severely with a nullah nullah. The native police at the Lower Herbert were advised, and a day or two after Sub-Inspector Johnstone called in on his way to the scene of depredation. The matter was satisfactorily seen to, the horses recovered, and the men departed on their way rejoicing.⁵³⁶

The Cooktown *Courier* of the 25th January reported:

The blacks at the Laura, on the old Palmerville-road are again giving trouble. A week ago, they amused themselves by pulling down about 500 yards of telegraph wire, and since then they have taken to their old pastime-horse and cattle spearing. Mr. Robinson, of the firm of Robinson and Byrnes, and Mr. Thompson, have both suffered in the matter of horseflesh, and Mr. Henry Jones has had a valuable milch cow speared. A mob of cows and calves and fat cattle, belonging to the above-mentioned firm, have also been driven away, and the owners are melancholy sanguine that they have met with the same fate. What makes these outrages more galling to the sufferers is the fact that a native police force is stationed within two miles of the scene of the outrages. Our informant states that the officer in charge (Mr. Connors) has been doing a little amateur missionary business, allowing the black vermin to come close to the barracks, and, in fact, killing them with kindness. The consequence is that they have established a regular reign of terror, and settlers are afraid to leave their homesteads lest their wives and children be butchered, and their property destroyed.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ Morning Bulletin 14 February 1879 p 2.

⁵³⁶ Queenslander 29 November 1879 p 679. Please refer to p 115 above.

⁵³⁷ Brisbane Courier 3 February 1879 p 3.

The Commissioner for Lands left Cooktown on 1 February 1879 to inspect the lands applied for on the McIvor River. It was intended to form a native police camp there.⁵³⁸ Then early on 6 February, Captain Sykes and Mr. Hartley went to the North Shore to recover a valuable cedar log lying on the beach, about five miles from Cooktown. As the locality was a known haunt of the blacks, they took a couple of revolvers. On approaching within about half a mile from the shore, blacks were descried, and heard cooeing one another. They ran the boat up close to where the log was lying and moored her securely, and at once started up the bank to reconnoitre. On reaching the top, a party of blacks were seen some short distance away, and others on the adjacent hills. The two gentlemen pointed their revolvers at the savages and warned them off, and then, finding that no effort was made to approach, returned to the beach and commenced examining the log in order to see if it would be possible to remove it by the aid of screw jacks. Mr. Hartley, realising the difficulty of the task, thought it would be advisable to return to Cooktown and get further assistance, but Captain Sykes believing that they could affect their object, applied one of the screw-jacks with partial success. They again reconnoitred the locality, but failed to distinguish any of the darkies about, and having lit a fire to boil their billy they brought the sail ashore to make a tent with, the sun being very hot. After refreshments, they proceeded to work, and continued uninterruptedly for almost half an hour or so, occasional trips being made to the top of the bank to see that all was safe. Captain Sykes was busily engaged on his knees manipulating one of the screw-jacks, whilst Mr. Hartley was just as intent upon a similar duty, when Captain Sykes uttered an exclamation somewhat to this effect—"Oh, what's that," feeling at the same time he had been struck in the right thigh, and Mr. Hartley, springing up, simultaneously cried out, "It's the niggers," and somewhat to his astonishment, discovered that a blackfellow's spear had penetrated through his right thigh, the end sticking out some six inches. Captain Sykes speedily discovered that he was too severely hurt to retaliate, and under the circumstances, both accepted the only alternative was to make for the boat. Mr. Hartley broke his spear off as closely as possible, and subsequently, at Captain Sykes' request, performed a similar service for him. In fearful pain and suffering, they managed to reach the boat. Mr. Hartley assisted his companion. Mr. Hartley offered to go back for the sail, but Captain Sykes objected, and by aid of the jib and one oar, pulled by Mr. Hartley, after four hours' duration they succeeded in making a landing near No. 2 wharf. On reaching land the two sufferers were promptly taken home, and Dr. Korteum was soon in attendance, who succeeded, with comparative little difficulty, in extracting the spear from Mr. Hartley's thigh, not, however, without first cutting off the barb that protruded through the wound. The injury to Captain Sykes was of a far more serious character, as the spear penetrated more deeply and in a worse place, and Dr. Korteum was compelled to use the knife to cut out the barb in the first instance, subsequent to which he was enabled, after some little difficulty, to draw the spear out.⁵³⁹ The Commissioner of Police received a telegram from Sub-Inspector Fitzgerald, Cooktown, stating that Sub-inspector O'Connor, with a party of native police, returned to town on 17 February, after having patrolled the north side of the Endeavour River. The party recovered all the property stolen from Captain Sykes and Mr. Hartley when they were attacked recently by blacks.⁵⁴⁰

The *Morning Bulletin* of 24 February 1879 ran the following report on the above incident:

On 7 February, a party of three crossed the Cooktown harbour with the intention of securing and bringing back the articles left behind by Captain Sykes. The party consisted of Mr. Browne of the *Herald* office, a boatman named Harris, and myself (W. H. Campbell). We were unable to take the boat close in shore in consequence of the heavy surf, so we anchored her in about five feet of water, and holding our sniders and ammunition over our heads waded ashore. On the beach near the log we found several tracks of men and women, and tracing them into the scrub found several of the

⁵³⁸ Brisbane Courier 5 February 1879 p 2.

⁵³⁹ Morning Bulletin 14 February 1879 p 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Telegraph 19 February 1879 p 2.

missing articles hidden there. We brought them down to the boat, and leaving a man in charge with orders to keep off the shore, we followed up the newly-made tracks. They brought us to a camp which had evidently been just deserted, as the fire was burning, and a quantity of cooked mangroves and bush yam were stacked on the ground quite hot and all ready for consumption. We also found some spears, and a pair of new boots belonging to Mr Hartley. Following the footprints through a small swamp we came upon two other camps, in both of which the fires were burning. We destroyed the food and burned the gunyahs, which had only been a few minutes erected. We also climbed the range where we found a large camp, but this had not been recently occupied. Finding we could not get to close quarters with the natives we returned to the beach, but as it was blowing a gale, we signalled to the boatman to stand off, and walked for about seven miles along the shore to a more sheltered spot, from which we managed to get on board the cutter once more, and reached Cooktown at dark. A party of six native troopers and two Europeans, who started out the night previous, and crossed the Endeavour twenty miles above us, never reached the scene of the affray, the intervening swamps being uncrossable by the horses. On Thursday, 14 February, Sub-inspector O'Connor with six troopers crossed the harbour in a boat at night, and by moonlight picked up the tracks of the blacks. The latter, however, discerned the approach of the troopers, and retreated across the range to the ocean beach. The Inspector then divided his forces, and with one party made a detour in the direction of Cape Bedford, and by Sunday morning had hemmed the blacks within a narrow gorge, of which both outlets were secured by the troopers. There were twenty-eight men and thirteen gins thus enclosed, of whom none of the former escaped. Twenty-four were shot down on the beach, and four swam out to sea. The Inspector and his men then sat down on the beach, and waited for the swimmers to return, but without success, after several hours they were lost sight of; it is conjectured they were drowned. One woman also swam out from the land, and after remaining four hours in the water was captured by a trooper, who went in after her. The men hunted up the remainder of the gins, and having found a meerscham pipe and tomahawk in their possession belonging to Mr. Hartley, the Inspector was satisfied he had not killed innocent people. This was explained to the lubras, and they were then permitted to go away. Mr. O'Connor returned to the north shore on Monday afternoon, and lighted a large fire as a signal of success, a boat was sent across the harbour to bring him back to Cooktown.⁵⁴¹

Although the account of the killing of twenty-four Aborigines by the Native Police aroused much indignation in the press the matter was officially dismissed in the following manner.⁵⁴² With reference to a detailed account of the retribution visited upon the blacks near Cooktown for their attack on Messrs. Hartley and Sykes, which stated that Sub-Inspector O'Connor with his black troopers shot down twenty-four of the men on the beach, the Commissioner of Police, in reply to enquiries regarding the affair, received a telegram from Inspector Isley, Cooktown on 4 March, reporting that no one accompanied Sub-Inspector O'Connor and his native troopers on his patrol except two Chinamen carrying rations for the party, and that no official authority had been given for the report published in the northern papers. It is just possible that on the occasion in question Sub-Inspector O'Connor never saw the blacks, although he succeeded in recovering the property lost by Messrs. Hartley and Sykes.⁵⁴³

Warden Sellheim reported to the Under Secretary for Mines from the Palmer goldfield for the month of March as follows: "The blacks have lately attacked a party of Chinese, but in this instance, certainly the first in Palmer history, the Chinese have come off victorious. On my requisition, the native police started at once in pursuit of the marauders, but did not come up with them until they had committed further depredations in the shape of killing a horse and a bullock."⁵⁴⁴ Inspector Isley informed the Commissioner for Police as follows: "Sub-Inspector Lamond reports

⁵⁴¹ Morning Bulletin 24 February 1879 p 2.

⁵⁴² Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 1 March 1879 p 2; Brisbane Courier 3 March 1879 p 2; Telegraph 4 March 1879 p 3 & 6 March 1879 p 2.

⁵⁴³ Queenslander 8 March 1879 p 313.

⁵⁴⁴ Queenslander 3 May 1879 p 564.

concerning the telegram transmitted on April 2 relative to the blacks on the Palmer, that he found the remains of bullocks and horses in a blacks' camp, also a dead body, which he supposed was the body of the aboriginal wounded by the Chinamen during the attack made by the blacks upon them."⁵⁴⁵

Because of early press reports suggesting Sub-Inspector Kaye and Sub-Inspector Gough, who went out in pursuit of blacks for a murder at Murgah station, Lower Diamantina, had perished from thirst, the Colonial Secretary made the following report available to the *Brisbane Courier* of 22 May 1879 for publication:

On February 10, Mr. Kaye, with three black troopers, arrived at Murgah station, and Mr. Lonergan, then in charge, lent him five fresh horses, and sent a stockman named Miller out with him next day as a guide. They patrolled as far as the South Australian border, and then returned to Bluff station, without having found any traces of the blacks. At the Bluff he received a note from Sub-Inspector Gough requesting him to meet him, and he went on and met Gough on February 15. The party then, consisting of the two sub-inspectors, the three troopers, and the stockman from Murgah, proceeded out west with Mr. Kelensey, manager of Bluff station, as guide. The first night out they camped without water, but they got some early, next day, and steered in the direction of the Herbert River, camping that night among some sandhills at a place where there was a little water left by a late thunderstorm. Next morning, about 10 a.m., they reached a small waterhole, and on leaving it they found the tracks of two blacks, and followed them all day, travelling about twenty-two miles, and camped without water that night. The following morning, they started, still following the tracks, in a north-west direction, and passed through some frightfully heavy country and sandhills to where one of the blackboys, a native of that part of the country, assured them there was a large waterhole, but on arriving they found there was not a drop of water in the hole. Thence the two sub-inspectors taking the lead, they struck into the flats subject to be flooded by the Herbert, but did not find any water. Late in the afternoon of that day, their horses being nearly knocked up, they decided to return to a small sandy creek they had seen that morning. The two sub-inspectors, Mr. Kelensey, and two troopers reached the creek after dark that night, and were only able to get sufficient brackish water for themselves, and found that all hope of saving the horses had passed. Next morning the third trooper came up, but Miller, who had been last seen when they turned back from the Herbert, did not arrive. Two of the horses having died, they gave a little water to two of the strongest remaining, and sent them in charge of Mr. Kelensey and one trooper to where they had seen the last water, the others of the party remaining camped where they were until evening, by which time all the other horses had died. The two whites and two troopers—having first secured the tents, arms, saddles, &c.—started on foot back for the water. Next morning, they were fortunate enough to get a thunderstorm, which gave them plenty of water to drink, and they reached the waterhole, where they found Mr. Kelensey and the black trooper. Thence they walked to the Bluff Station. A trooper was sent on to Murgah station to get the horses left there by Mr. Kaye, and while he was away, they borrowed others; Gough and Kaye started after the blacks, found a large camp, and dispersed them. Next day they started for the scene of their disaster, via Eyre's creek, and arrived at Annandale on March 6, when they got fresh horses from Mr. Hood, started again, and cut the tracks not far from where they turned back into the Herbert flats. On their tracks they found Miller's footmarks going both ways—namely, back the way they had gone, and returning towards where they had last seen him. They followed his tracks back to within about a mile of where their horses were lying dead, where they found Miller's mare with her throat cut and a large piece of flesh cut off her ribs. They camped there without water, and next day tracked him back to a point within a short distance of where he was last seen, and where his tracks turned away from theirs and went in the direction of the Herbert River. Here all trace of him was lost, as a thunderstorm had fallen sufficient to obliterate his tracks, but not to leave any water. Thence they made in for Annandale, as they had not had any water since noon of the previous day. Sub-Inspector Kaye afterwards patrolled up the Herbert to Glengyle, where he dispersed a large camp of niggers as punishment for the murder of a stockman

⁵⁴⁵ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 17 April 1879 p 2.

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named Scott, about a month previously. While patrolling up the Herbert every search was made for Miller, but no trace of him was found, but he turned up all right about three weeks afterwards.⁵⁴⁶

A Native Police station was established at Betts' Gorge, 18 miles from Hughenden, where two sub-inspectors were quartered; but they were not wanted. The native police at Betts's Gorge was eventually removed to Cornish Creek, near Muttaborra in the face of appeals for police protection, from the Etheridge and Port Douglas districts.⁵⁴⁷

The Police Commissioner in his 1879 annual report summed up the situation as follows:

The spread of settlement has rendered the formation of additional police stations necessary, and this, in consequence of the large reduction made in the number employed, has considerably weakened the power of the police to cope with the criminal class in the larger townships; and as applications are still being continually made for police protection, it will be necessary, if it is considered advisable to comply with those demands, to increase the number of constables. With a view to the gradual disembodying of the Native Police Force several detachments have been broken up and the troopers distributed as trackers amongst the ordinary Police Stations. Should this be found to succeed it is proposed to continue the system until the Native Police, as a separate Force, ceases to exist.⁵⁴⁸

Distribution of Native Police Colony-wide for 1879 - Pugh's Almanac

Location	Magistrate & C.P.S.	Police	Native Troopers
Aramac	Thos S Sword	1 Snr Constable, 2 Constable	1
Barron River		2 sub-inspectors, 1 constable	15
Barcoo River		1 Constable	5
Belyando River		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	8
Blackall	AW Compigne	Inspector Armstrong, 1 sub-inspector, 1 Snr constable, 5 constables	1
Bloomsbury		1 sub-inspector	8
Booligar		1 snr constable	1
Bowen	P Macarthur, CPS John Macalister	Inspector, 1 sergeant, 5 constables	1
Bowen Downs		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Bulloo River		1 snr constable	2
Bynoe		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Charleville	W. E. P. Okeden	Inspector Thomas Thornton; 1 sergeant, 4 constables	2
Cooktown	Howard St. George; C.P.S. James Pryde	Inspector J Isley; 1 sub-inspectors, 1 snr sergeant, 1 senior, 23 constables	5
Craigie		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Cunnamulla	W. O. Norris	1 sergeant, 1 constable	2
Diamantina		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Dunrobin		1 constable	10
Edwardstown		1 sub-inspector, 1 snr, 3 constables	1
Ellangowan		1 senior	2
Georgetown	WO Hodgkinson, CPS BC McGroarty	1sub-inspector, 1 sergeant, 2 constables	2
Gladstone	CW Rich, CPS Chas S Graham	1 sergeant, 2 constables	1
Hughenden		2 sub-inspectors, 1 constable	12
Jundah		2 sub-inspector, 1 constable	7
Kirknie Creek		1 sub-inspector, 1 sergeant, 1 constable	8

⁵⁴⁶ Page 3.

⁵⁴⁷ Western Star and Roma Advertiser 16 October 1879 p 3.

⁵⁴⁸ Report of the Commissioner of Police for the Year 1879, dated 1 June 1880.

Queensland Native Police

Laura River		2 sub-inspectors, 2 constables	11
Lower Herbert		2 sub-inspectors, 1 constable	10
Marlborough		1 sergeant, 1 constable	2
Millchester	C. S. Dicken; C.P.S. W. M. Mowbra	1 sergeant, 2 constables	2
Mitchell		1 sergeant, 1 constable	1
Mount Cornish		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Normanby		1 sub-inspector, 1 snr, 1 constable	7
Palmer River	P. J. Sellheim, CPS JA Armstrong	1 sub-inspectors, 1 senior and 1 constable	7
Port Douglas	Ed, RN McCarthy	1 Inspector, 1 sergeant, 1 snr, 11 constables	5
Ravenswood	WRO Hill, C.P.S. W C Samuell	1 sergeant, 2 constables	1
Richmond Downs		2 sub-inspectors	6
Rolleston		1 snr constable	1
Roma	John Murphy, CPS Lewis Jackson	Inspector AL Morisset; 1 sergeant, 11 constables	3
Saxby		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	6
Springsure	J. G. MacDonald	1 senior sergeant, 3 constables	3
St. George	Thos. Mowbray, CPS Jas B Tonson	1 senior, 3 constables	2
Surat	R. T. Taylor	1 senior, 1 constable	1
Tambo	FH Hyde	1 sergeant, 3 constables	1
Taroom		1 snr constable, 1 constable	1
Townsville	Chas, S Dicken; C.P.S. W. H. Dean	1 sub-inspector, 2 seniors, 12 constables	2
Walsh River		1 sub-inspector, 1 constable	8
Westwood		1 sergeant	2
Western Creek		2 sub-inspectors	12
Yo Yo Creek		1 sub-inspectors, 1 snr, 1 constable	5



ON THE TRAIL OF THE KELLYS.
Police officers and Queensland trackers engaged in hunting the bushrangers.
ENR. CONST. KING. INSPECTOR STANHOPE O'CONNOR (Queensland). SUPT. J. SADLEIR. CHIEF COMMISSIONER F. C. STANDISH (Victoria).

Haydon, A. L., The trooper police of Australia

Final Analysis



By the erection of the colony of Queensland in 1859, the grazing of sheep and cattle had completely transformed at least a quarter of the land use in Queensland and had become the cornerstone of the colonial economy. Three and a half million sheep and some 500,000 cattle grazed across a quarter of the colony's land mass, and pastoral concerns generated 70 per cent of revenue and over 90 per cent of exports. 'Wool, tallow, and hides are the great staple products of our colony', observed the *Brisbane Courier* in 1861. The method of settlement of Queensland by colonists was piecemeal or incremental. By and large interested parties would ride out and search for grazing land or a run. If suitable country was found, they would apply to the District Commissioner of Crown Lands for a licence, and then apply for a lease of the run for a period of fourteen years. The size of the Runs was not to be less than twenty-five square miles nor more than one hundred square miles.⁵⁴⁹

The colony of Queensland provided no support or infra-structure to pastoralists taking up land in the unsettled areas: no roads or bridges, no postal service, no government services, no assistance whatever. This type of governance where there is no government intervention either by way of assistance or hindrance, completely devoid of red and green tape, is called free-market capitalism. If the squatter gains nothing this year, he makes up for it next year; and in the meantime, the rent and station expenses are trifling compared with what the profit would be, taking an average of years, under good management. In other words, neither the Imperial nor the Queensland government put the unsettled or waste land of the colony under civil or military control, built no forts, stationed no troops nor conducted any type of dealings or communications with the uncontacted tribes of the interior of which there were many.⁵⁵⁰

After an area attracted several runs or stations, a native police camp might be established in the area which was paid for by the settlers' taxes and grazing charges and levies. On the bushveld, the

⁵⁴⁹ Unoccupied Crown Lands Occupation Act 1860, (24 Vic. No. 11).

⁵⁵⁰ Aboriginal Tribes of Australia by Norman B Tindale, ANU Press, Canberra 1974 pp 164-190.

prairies or the never never, settlers and myall blacks took their chances and may the best man win. The previous chapters above are replete with endless incidents of local blacks killing settlers and taking their bodies and property for consumption, use and adornment. The technology employed on the runs or stations was as old as the bible itself; the Old Testament was more than an adequate textbook for the business of animal husbandry, a shepherd and his flock.

The colony of Queensland never had any doubts about its sense of political legitimacy or that it was a duly constituted entity according to the laws of God and man, after all they had Queen Victoria and the British parliament behind them. When the colony of Queensland was created it came with all the attributes of a democratic state. It had a Governor as head of state and a bicameral parliament to represent the views and aspirations of the citizens together with an independent judiciary. The reader needs to keep in mind that the government of the colony of Queensland was constitutionally sound, operated according to principles of law and was duly elected. The colony inherited from the earlier entity of the Moreton Bay settlement many elements of its executive administration, in particular a native police force.

On 13 January 1860, Edric Norfolk Vaux Morisset, Esq., Commandant of Native Police, was appointed Inspector-General of Police for Queensland.⁵⁵¹ Morisset had been appointed a Lieutenant of the third division of Native Police of New South Wales on 14 February 1853 and on 4 May 1857, Commandant of the Native Police.⁵⁵²

In January 1858, from his Headquarters at Maryborough, Commandant Morisset issued the following order to officers and camp sergeants of the Native Police:

10th. It is the duty of the Officers at all times and opportunities to disperse any large assemblage of blacks; such meetings, if not prevented, invariably lead to depredations or murder; and nothing but the mistaken kindness of the Officers in command inspired the blacks with sufficient confidence to commit the late fearful outrages on the Dawson River. The Officers will therefore see the necessity of teaching the aborigines that no outrage or depredation shall be committed with impunity—but on the contrary, retributive justice shall speedily follow the Commission of crime; nevertheless the Officers will be careful in receiving reports against the blacks, as it frequently happens that, mistakes are made as to the identity of the aggressors. In case of any collision with the aborigines a report is to be forwarded to the Commandant without delay. (signed) E. V. MORISSET, Commandant Native Police.⁵⁵³

This approach was seen as a failure of policy towards Aborigines in nineteenth century Queensland. Rowley in the *Destruction of Aboriginal Society* said as follows:

This was the train of reasoning which led to the policy of 'dispersal' by the Native Police of Queensland, maintained for four decades—an argument which assumed that gatherings of Aborigines were planning crime and justified attacks by the Native Police. This, of course, hit at the very core of the Aboriginal social organisation and of the continuity of tradition in the great ceremonies. It could have done more to hasten the disintegration of the old Aboriginal society than all the killings.⁵⁵⁴

There was perhaps a distorted perspective of Aborigines in Queensland during the nineteenth century. They were looked upon as a homogeneous group without seeing any differentiation. The

⁵⁵¹ Qld Gazette No.6, 14 January 1860 p 26. Appointed Commandant Native Police, NSW Gazette No. 68, 5 May 1857 p 1023.

⁵⁵² NSW Gazette No. 20, 15 February 1853 p 314.

⁵⁵³ Qld Select Committee on the Native Police Force, 1861 p 151.

⁵⁵⁴ THE DESTRUCTION OF ABORIGINAL SOCIETY, ABORIGINAL POLICY AND PRACTICE—Volume I, C. D. Rowley ANU Press Canberra 1970 p 42.

differentiation is best illustrated by the striking dichotomy of the then nature of the Queensland way of life: an easy life in the city or a hard life working in the outback. At the time I speak of, the colony of Queensland was more or less divided into the settled areas and the unsettled areas, which, by and large, produced the bulk of the revenue of the colony which was pastoral driven. What the educated classes of the cities saw about them was a degraded remnant of tribal Aborigines, which simultaneously engendered a sympathy for and an urge to ameliorate this vision of abject destitution; and when they read in their city newspapers that myall Aborigines were being shot down like dogs, this naturally inflamed them to attack the whole apparatus of the Native Police.⁵⁵⁵ On the other hand, squatters, farm labourers and gold diggers of the outback only saw the myall blacks stalking them across the landscape for one purpose only, murder and mayhem, which reinforced the need for the native police, if they were going to survive and the colony prosper.

It is certain that the settler and the pioneer must be protected — we who are secure from the attacks of the savages, cannot sit quietly down and allow those who are opening up the country to be slaughtered and their property sacrificed by those who will not, and perhaps cannot, adopt our modes of life, and who wander — under the first dispensation — over a country they cannot sufficiently occupy, nor in any way improve. We are no advocates for rooting out the blacks; we would much rather see civilisation grafted on the wild stock, and would employ only as last resources the rifle and the revolver. We have tried hard to woo the blacks from their savage way of life: but the blacks of to-day are as wild and irreconcilable as they were years ago, and the lives and properties of pioneer settlers are not safe from the attacks of those who recognize no laws and can be bound by no treaties. What have been the results of our false humanity, of our Exeter Hall philanthropy? The miserable, wretches who creep round Brisbane, Rockhampton, and other chief towns, are thoroughly demoralised; they rob us, and will — on opportunity — cut our throats. Those who wander over our sparsely settled districts, destroy our cattle, burn down our homesteads, and commit murder, therefore they must be driven back by the rifle; there is no help for it, and the sooner the work commences the better.⁵⁵⁶

One of the first steps taken by the government of Queensland was to hold an inquiry into the efficiency and management of the Police and the Native Police on 20 June 1860. The need for the Native Police was confirmed. Several recommendations were made to improve its overall efficiency and management but at no stage was the necessity of the native police questioned. They were seen as an integral part of the governance of Queensland. By December 1860, the number of officers had increased to eighteen plus one cadet officer with an additional fifth division for the newly created district of Burdekin. This was followed by the government announcing in April of 1861 that the Native Police were a necessary protective force and a further inquiry would be held to make additional improvements in the native police and whether the conditions of the Aborigines might be ameliorated. That committee once again confirmed the necessity of the native police and “that any want of discipline that has existed in this Force, or any excesses that are attributable to the Troopers, have arisen mainly from the inefficiency, the indiscretion, and the intemperate habits of some of the Officers, rather than from any defect in the system itself.”

As regards the Aborigines, the committee found:

The evidence taken by your Committee shews beyond doubt that all attempts to Christianise or educate the aborigines of Australia have hitherto proved abortive. Except in one or two isolated cases, after being brought up and educated for a certain period, the Natives of both sexes invariably return to their savage habits. Credible witnesses shew that they are addicted to cannibalism; that they

⁵⁵⁵ The view of the 1861 Select Committee was that the Press greatly exaggerated the charges of gross cruelty against the Aborigines, p 7, 63 & 103. What is now called fake-news; sensationalism to sell newspapers.

⁵⁵⁶ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 19 November 1870 p 2.

have no idea of a future state; and are sunk in the lowest depths of barbarism. Missions have been established amongst them at different periods with but partial success; and the same may be said of the schools established in the different Colonies. Nevertheless, your Committee feel justified in recommending to the notice of the Government the plan sketched forth in the evidence of Mr. Zillman ... (to) the establishment of a Missionary Cotton Company.⁵⁵⁷

In keeping with the desirable practice of putting the Aborigine side of the story, I turn to the evidence of James Davis, aka Duramboi, given before the 1861 select committee.⁵⁵⁸

4. And have you from choice, during your residence in the country, spent some time with the natives? I think I was with them fifteen years and three months.

5. By Mr. Blakeney: You spent that time with them? I was fourteen years, and never saw a white man.

6. By the Chairman: Consequently, you must know a good deal of the habits, customs, and language of the natives? I ought and I do so.

14. Have you noticed that any of these blacks are cannibals? The whole of them are.

15. Without doubt? I believe so, but I should not like to say that they are cannibals all over the interior. As far as I have been—and I think I have been six or seven hundred miles to the north—they are all cannibals.

16. You must often have seen them eating the blacks? I have seen them eat hundreds of them.

17. On what occasions do they generally eat them—do they eat their comrades after a battle? Yes, any young men or middle-aged men—men up to forty—all the men fit for fighting are eaten; they are skinned first, and roasted; their skin and bones are kept for a remembrance.

18. The skin and bones of those that are killed? Yes.

19. I am to presume that they eat their comrades from choice, and not from starvation? It is not starvation—not at all: they just eat them from fancy for the food; they are very fond of human flesh; the bodies are very fat—children of two years old are quite fat, and they are very fond of the fat.

29. You were speaking of the large scrubs they would get into—what is your opinion as to a Protective Force to prevent them from committing depredations on the whites—do you consider a Black Force better than a White one? Undoubtedly, I do.

30. Do you think a White Force could follow them into a scrub? They would be no use after blacks over mountains or through a scrub, compared with the Native Police. I believe in the Native Police in my heart.

31. What is your opinion of the Native Police Force? As far as I have heard from the blacks, and from what I have seen, they are in great dread of the Native Police when tracking and following them. No white man could track them in the scrub, but if a black puts his nose to the ground, he can tell their track by blowing, and by his sight, which is very correct.

32. They are in dread, you say, of the Native Police? Yes.

33. More so than of the whites? Yes, more so by a great deal.

36. You don't think it advisable that the troopers of Native Police should be recruited in the districts where they are to remain on duty? I don't think it would be advisable.

37. Do you think, after having been so many years among the blacks, that anything could be done in civilising them, or putting them to school? That has been tried: it was tried when I first came into the Colony, twenty years ago. There have been missions in all directions, and orphan schools, and they have tried all means with them, but I understood the missionaries never could manage them: they are a lazy race, and not inclined for doing any good. They are all very well to ride a horse and so on, and go with bullock drays, but, for agricultural purposes, they are no good.

47. Then you do not think, from what you have seen of the manners, habits, and customs of the blacks, that it is possible to do anything with them? I think it would be impossible, unless they were taken on to an island by themselves, from which they could not escape—an island without timber.

48. By Mr. Watts: Do you think that the Native Police are cruel to the blacks? Well, I can't say. I have heard of cruel acts from the blacks, but I have never seen any. It is my belief that the Native Police do their duty, and I highly approve of them.

⁵⁵⁷ 1861 Legislative Assembly Native Police Report. See Appendix C attached hereto.

⁵⁵⁸ Davis is recorded as John Davies, see p 54 of the above Report.

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49. Do you think that the troopers are thoroughly under the command of their officers? I believe they are, from what conversation I have had with the Police. Some of the Force can speak the same language as I can.

50. Do not the blacks feed a spirit of revenge when the native troopers, or any persons, take their gins away? If the gins are taken by force, but not if they are given willingly.

51. Do you think, from what you know and what you have heard among the blacks that the Native Police are in the habit of taking gins away by force? I never heard the blacks say that the gins had been taken away, but I have heard them say that they had lent their gins to the Native Police for their use.

52. Did you ever hear them say that the gins could not be prevented from following the Native Police? Never.

53. You don't think it likely that the gins would follow the Native Police? I don't think it likely that a gin would follow a strange blackfellow.

54. Do you not think it would be very advisable on the part of the officers to prevent the troopers from taking gins? Undoubtedly so.

103. Do you think it possible for any body of white men to apprehend blacks in the scrub? They might catch one in five years, or one to a black-fellow's ten. It is a difficult thing for either blacks or whites to catch natives in the scrub; but if anyone can do it, it is the Native Troopers.

104. When they have apprehended blacks, don't you think it would be desirable that they should have something in the shape of an iron collar, in preference to handcuffs, from which the blacks often escape? I think there should be something round the neck; I have known several instances of blacks escaping with handcuffs on, and then sending them back to the constables here; they have done that several times.

105. If the Native Police troopers secured them with an iron collar and chain, do you not think it would save the life of many a prisoner? It is my belief that it would.

106. I understand you to say that you have known many instances of blacks escaping when handcuffs and ropes have been used? I have.

Of course, the obvious question is how much weight do you give to Davis' evidence. The Black Armband Brigade completely ignores him. Thus, his evidence is rarely if ever featured in their cherry-picked books and papers on the Native Police. If Davis' evidence is credible, then it seems to me one can perhaps open a window into the thinking of these policy makers. It may be of course that Davis was simply confirming the prejudices and stereotypical views of Aborigines held by the committee. Nevertheless, the committee did make an attempt to try and find out what was the nature of the Aborigines. Davis' statement that: "48. By Mr. Watts: Do you think that the Native Police are cruel to the blacks? Well, I can't say. I have heard of cruel acts from the blacks, but I have never seen any. It is my belief that the Native Police do their duty, and I highly approve of them." was perhaps the confirmation that the committee needed to continue with Native Police.

When the 1861 Select Committee's report reached the Legislative Council, the President spoke against the report:

it did seem strange to him that it never occurred to those who took an active part in the discussion that the native police force as at present constituted was clearly illegal, and in direct violation of the fundamental principles of the British constitution. The hon. gentleman then went on to show that, according to the Bill of Rights, the raising of a standing army in time of peace other than the regular army was illegal. He maintained, therefore, that the native police, being an armed force unconnected with the regular army, was, according to the article in the Bill of Rights, an illegal force, and, as such, in direct violation of a law sanctioning the appointment of militia. ... He concluded by moving: "...That in the opinion of this Council the government ought to introduce, at as early a moment as possible, a measure giving legality to the formation of this force."⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁹ Legislative Council 30 July 1861.

The majority of the Council was of the view that the Native Police were as Mr. Galloway said, “simply police, and therefore just as legal as any other police.”⁵⁶⁰

In the Introduction to this book, I postulated that the aboriginal natives of Australia were not only ignorant of the ways, usages, and culture of the white man but that they had deliberately refused to investigate and acquire the necessary knowledge to understand the culture of the white man so that they might have at least come to an appreciation of his conduct and efforts to establish himself in Australia. I further suggested that the Aborigines could only be redeemed from ignorance by their own adoption of certain ideas and the fundamental principles of knowledge. It was not possible to conclude a treaty of peace with a people who had no civil authority established amongst themselves and waged war on each other. The colonies of Australia had experienced many schemes for the civilisation of Aborigines, and the result had been abject failure and consequently, the governments could do nothing more than ensure that the Aborigines should not be interfered with nor molested, whilst restraining them from committing any outrage against white settlers.

If the Aborigines had come to an understanding of the white man and his need for grazing livestock, then this surely would have placed them in a position to have entered into diplomacy with the whites over the use and occupation of the land. This refusal by Aborigines to understand and engage with the white man through diplomacy rather than violence can be seen from the above words of the 1861 Select Committee. Moreover, this refusal by the Aborigines was treated by the 1861 Select Committee as a rejection of the white man in toto. Consequently, the 1861 Select Committee in keeping with their cultural practice of protecting life and property interpreted the failure of the Aborigines to acquire western education and to accept the gospel as notice of their intention to continue their savage habits of destruction. Such an interpretation meant for the Select Committee the continuation of the Native Police. Therefore, some have argued that the government of Queensland did not have a policy on Aborigines, when in fact the opposite was true. The government had a most effective policy, they set a thief to catch a thief: by employing Aborigines, who could use the same skills of stalking and ambush, against the entrenched aggression of the myall blacks, who never sought to parley or negotiate with the white settlers as they took up new country.

No sooner had the 1861 Select Committee tabled their report than the Aborigines attacked and massacred the Wills’ party on the Nogoa River on 17 October 1861. This event can only be seen as confirming in the eyes of the settlers that aboriginal violence was an entrenched part of taking-up new country and could only be answered by swift police action to apprehend and bring to justice all the perpetrators of this crime.⁵⁶¹ Every schoolboy knows that William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066 but few could tell you why. The massacre of H. S. Wills at Cullin-la-Ringo on 17 October 1861 is known but nobody knows why the Kairi tribe killed Wills and his party.

From time to time, the Australian government has issued white papers on defence. Often times, they contained “a comprehensive assessment of Australia's long-term strategic outlook.” Perhaps the first ever assessment of Australia's long-term strategic outlook was given by Captain Arthur Phillip when he said:

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid. This view that the native police were an illegally constituted organisation has gained great support amongst the Black Armband Brigade. However, they have never offered any proof that the force was without legal foundation; see Courier 6 August 1861 p 2 & 12 September 1861 p 2 and my Introduction to this book.

⁵⁶¹ See the letter of Mr. Oscar de Satge, Wolfgang Downs, 12 April 1866, to the *Peak Downs Telegram* of 21 April 1866 at p 71 above.

When we first landed it was to have been wished, but at that time, and for that time, and for months after that period, the slightest defence could not have been made without neglecting what was so immediately and absolutely necessary — the securing (of) the stores and provisions. I believe there is little reason to think that the natives will ever attack any building, and still less to suppose they will attack a number of armed men; not that I think they want innate bravery — they certainly do not — but they are sensible of the great superiority of our arms. Setting fire to the corn I most feared, but which they never have attempted; and as these avoid those places we frequent, it is seldom that any of them are now seen near the settlement. The cattle, if they find them in the woods, they undoubtedly will destroy, which is all I believe the settlers will have to apprehend. Their attacking stragglers is natural, for those people go out to rob the natives of their spears and the few articles they possess; and as they do it too frequently with impunity, the punishments they sometimes meet with are not to be regretted — they have had a good effect.⁵⁶²

It will appear to your Lordship, after what has been said of the natives, that a less force will be wanted for the security of the settlement than what I considered as necessary soon after my arrival in this country, although that was not considerable; but as the military must be supported by the labour of others, which is felt in an infant colony so distant from any resource as this is placed, and in which, if it was possible, everyone should be employed in procuring for himself the necessities of life, I presume that a battalion of five hundred men will be sufficient, which will admit of one hundred being detached for the security of Norfolk Island.⁵⁶³

The above strategic assessment by Captain Phillip of the threat posed by the Aborigines having regard to the many collisions between myall blacks and settlers over the history of the settlement of Australia was about right. The Aborigines lost the tactical initiative in allowing the First Fleet to disembark, had they treated Phillip's entry as an invasion and declared war on him they could have driven him back into the sea with little effort rather than allowing him to establish a friendly outpost of empire. Regarding Phillip's observation that the Aborigines would not be a threat to established towns but would happily kill cattle and isolated whites, in this, by and large, he was also correct. The massacre of the Wills' party, therefore, from a modern-day perspective is simply this that Wills failed to put in place an adequate risk management plan for his grazing enterprise. However, the issue that has to be addressed is how was the massacre of white settlers viewed in context? There was no Aborigine view of the matter. The Kairi tribe did not communicate to the white community before or after the event, not even when Lieut. William Cave of the native police confronted them.⁵⁶⁴ The white community of the day was divided as usual, firstly, calling for more native police and then over the punishment meted out to the blacks, some believing it just, others believing it was excessive.⁵⁶⁵

The remarkable aspect of this incident from the Aborigine perspective is that no lessons were learned from the Kairi tactics of killing white settlers who set up runs or stations for grazing purposes. Because, as settlement moved further north and west, aboriginal depredations continued for the next forty years until the tribes became burnt out wrecks of their former selves. The empirical evidence of the myall or uncontacted Aborigine is that they lived within their tribe who in turn lived within its habitat or sphere of influence and from time to time waged war on neighbouring tribes. Each tribe was divided into clans who came together for corroborees and borees? There was no gathering together of tribal leaders across the colony for the purpose of holding great councils of war, for holding war dances to drum up big medicine to drown the white man in a sea of his own blood. As noted, the Black Armband Brigade run a line that the Aborigines of Australia conducted an underground resistance style campaign against the white settlers as they

⁵⁶² Historical Records of New South Wales. Vol. I, Part 2. — Phillip. 1783—1792. Phillips' Instructions, Governor Phillip to Under Secretary Nepean. Government House, Sydney Cove, 17 June 1790 p 347.

⁵⁶³ Ibid p 310.

⁵⁶⁴ One of the blacks who was shot cried out, "Me no kill white fellow!" showing that they comprehended the proceedings. Sydney Morning Herald 11 December 1861 p 5. This does not appear in the official report of the incident.

⁵⁶⁵ Sydney Morning Herald 16 November 1861 p 7 & Courier 10 January 1862 p 2.

took up new country on an ever-expanding frontier. The theory of modern resistance shows that the movement needs organisation and communication between cells or operatives to be effective. Aborigines at that stage of their existence had no sense of oppression. There were no secret networks or inter-tribal hit squads such as the Mau Mau. Noel Loos makes the following grand political anachronism:

There is ample evidence that Aborigines communicated the nature of the threat the invaders offered over long distances and that they reacted in a variety of ways according to the nature of such information.⁵⁶⁶

The Police Act of 1863, which came into effect on 1 January 1864, brought stability and structure to the Queensland police force as well as effective control of the police including the native police across the colony as a whole. The appointment of David Thompson Seymour in turn brought organization and cohesion to the force which up to that time had been a fragmented collection of town constables across the settled areas of the colony with Native Police dangling as an ad hoc enforcement agency. A uniform management approach was instituted by Seymour and reinforced by the power he had pursuant to the act to make rules and regulations for the control and organisation of the force as evidenced by the Rules (Regulations) for the Police Force which were on 11 March 1864, published by the Colonial Secretary's Office. These Rules were introduced so that the force could be conducted upon one uniform system, in the execution of their several duties with proper instructions.

The economy of Queensland began to falter from about 1866, which led to a knock-on effect in the grazing industry with many runs being abandoned. However, as luck would have it, gold was discovered in 1867 at Ridgeland within the Rockhampton area, and at Gympie, which lies on the Mary River. Further discoveries occurred at the coastal city of Townsville in the following year; at the Gilbert River in Far North Queensland in 1869; at Ravenswood and Charters Towers in 1872; at the Palmer River, north of Maytown and southwest of Cooktown in 1873; and, at the Hodgkinson River in 1875. This brought a different type of individual to the wilderness of Queensland, the rugged and intrepid miner or as he became known on the Queensland goldfields, the digger. This workforce made up of a myriad of solitary gold fossickers fanned out and charged into the scrubs and ridges and gullies of the north in a rush that stretched in a frenzied column from Cooktown to kingdom come and appeared never-ending. But lurking in the shadows of the mighty gums and in the nooks-and-crannies of the telluric formations lay the Aborigines who preyed upon these diggers as if they were fair game of field and stream. In his 1871 annual report, the Commissioner of Police gave a fair outline of the operational situation in the northern goldfields outlining the murderous activities of the Aborigines. It has been argued by some that the activities of Aborigines towards the gold prospectors of the northern goldfields should be seen as a point of frontier conflict.⁵⁶⁷ Be that as it may, the cold hard reality is that no digger or alluvial gold miner ever sought to deal with Aborigines in anyway whatsoever. He was there for the gold. He was the true entrepreneur funded by the only asset he had, his two bare hands and maybe a shovel. The Palmer River goldfields were situated inland of Cooktown surrounded by rough, rugged terrain in every direction. To walk from Cooktown, the pilgrim would first encounter crocodiles, mangroves, and swarms of mosquitoes. Then the terrain changed to dry, arid savannah

⁵⁶⁶ Loos, Noel (1976) *Aboriginal-European relations in North Queensland, 1861-1897*. PhD thesis, James Cook University. Vol. 1 Part II Chapters 4-5, p 160. Note that Loos gives no citation for this assertion other than the old academic cliché, there is ample evidence. Stanner, *WHITE MAN GOT NO DREAMING*, said: Not having any established villages or hamlets they could, and did, bend their frontal line whenever the whites came, and after flinging a few spears, co-operated in their own destruction by accepting a parasitic role which enabled them to live peaceably near the intruding whites. Pp 4-5.

⁵⁶⁷ *Invasion and Resistance Aboriginal-European relations on the North Queensland frontier 1861-1897*, Noel Loos, ANU Press, 1982.

country, incredibly difficult country without water, or bush food and relentless heat. The track zigzagged along steep ridgelines which abruptly ended, then the pilgrim would descend into a deep gully, straight off the side of one mountain then back up the side of the next to pick up a new ridgeline. This was repeated seemingly forever. Spare a thought for the pilgrim pushing his wheelbarrow and all his worldly goods through this country. Once they arrived, they faced extreme heat, very little water, no food and hard, rocky ground and in turn were greeted by a reception party who hurled spears and nullah nullahs at them in the hope of turning these new chums into a hearty meal. Whether he grew fat on purloined bullock or roast Chinaman, or remained virtuously lean on a sparse diet of possum, roots, and fish, that was the question which faced the myall black?

By end of 1876, there were Native Police camps stretching from Burketown on the Gulf, down the east coast at Cooktown, Murray River, Townsville west to the Palmer River, Etheridge, Saxby, Belyando, Nebo, Roma and then further west to Charleville then onto the deep south-western pocket of Yo Yo Creek, the Paroo and the Barcoo.

Ratcliffe Pring, the Attorney-General made the following observation on the Native Police in the Legislative Assembly on 6 February 1868:

The native force was not organised to commit murder; it was intended as a protective force, but it was never intended to be applied except as against the absolute savage, the "myall," as he was termed, who had never come within the jurisdiction of the law, a man who was as much a savage as a man could be; who could not speak the language of the white man. But the native police were not savages but had been specially trained and educated for their duties. Being under the command of an officer; if he did his duty, the troopers could always be kept under control, to such an extent as to prevent them from committing murder, or doing anything else that would cause regret to any colonist in Queensland. He was not certain that so much wrong or illegality took place as many honourable members seemed to imagine. It was generally understood that the force was only employed against the outside blacks; and when they committed any outrage the usual course was to track those who had committed the outrage and punish them as warlike tribes. It was, in such a case, a state of war; and was he to be told that because the police fired upon a warlike tribe, they committed murder? He should say, nay.⁵⁶⁸

On 21 January 1865 the first annual report of the Queensland Police Force was published showing the colony wide distribution of the Native Police with twenty officers and 126 troopers. Annual reports together with attachments setting out relevant police data were issued each year, which, if examined closely regarding the white component of the Queensland Police, no doubt would have provided adequate material for an audit of the police. However, the annual reports did not contain much material relating to the native police nor did the reports contain data on Aboriginal arrests, Aboriginal offending patterns or other relevant information. Therefore, it is difficult to carry out an audit of the Native Police as to its organisational structure, police operations, nature of Aboriginal criminal activity encountered, clear-up rates, or questions of justifiable police shootings or police murders.

The fashionable approach is to troll through the records to extract the "bad apples" by reputation in the Native Police and then to draw some clichéd ideological conclusion or adopt some outlandish position by analogy. The 1861 Select Committee identified four officers involved in what some members of the public considered unjustifiable shootings of Aborigines, John Bligh for shooting an Aborigine in the Mary River; Frederick Wheeler for shooting Aborigines at Dugandan, Logan and Fassifern and John Murray for failing to exercise control over a junior

⁵⁶⁸ Hansard LA 6 February 1868 p 952.

officer who shot a number of Aborigines at Manumbar. The final incident involved F^T Powell, who was said to have shot Gulliver, a native police trooper implicated in the murder of Fanny Briggs. The evidence suggested Gulliver was shot whilst escaping from police custody. Each of the above incidents were investigated by ministerial and parliamentary inquiry (non-judicial) and found to be regrettable but no action should be taken against the officers in question, who continued to serve in the native police. The Fassifern incident was said to be the subject of a Coroner's inquiry but the Attorney-General refused to act on the findings.

In 1863 Marmaduke Richardson, an officer of native police, at Yatton, on the Isaac River shot an Aborigine called Wallace. Although proceedings were commenced against Richardson, nothing eventuated and Richardson was dismissed from the Native Police. Joseph Donald Harris, 2nd Lieutenant of native police in search of deserters shot Jemmy, an Aborigine. He was the subject of judicial inquiry which discharged him from the charge of murder. Subsequently, the Police Magistrate was cashiered and Harris dismissed from the Native Police. The next case of interest is officer Myrtil Aubin who in 1867 led a detachment of native police which shot and killed a number of Aborigines at Morinish, Rockhampton. Aubin was dismissed because "an error of judgement had been committed. He thought the officer had acted with want of judgement, but not with cruelty."⁵⁶⁹ It seems once again that the authorities treated the killings as justifiable homicide.

The cause célèbre of the Native Police corps is no doubt the case of Frederick Wheeler who was charged with the wilful murder of an aboriginal named Jemmy at the Belyando Native Police Barracks. The nature of the deceased's death is somewhat gruesome in that on 11 March 1876, the victim was flogged and then kicked in the stomach whilst he lay stricken on the ground. He did not die of his wounds and injuries until 15 March 1876. Wheeler was committed to stand trial for murder at the next Rockhampton assizes of the Supreme Court and was remanded into custody. Wheeler made an application for bail which was granted. On release from prison on bail for murder, Frederick Wheeler fled the jurisdiction and was never to be seen again. Wheeler has come to be seen as emblematic of the native police corps. For all those commentators who cannot get their head round the historical meaning of the native police, and there are many, Wheeler stands as a mooring point from which they can lash out at the egregious cruelty and flagrant violation of human rights that is alleged against the native police in their operational role of protecting the frontier settlements. Two other officers were accused of outrages. Wentworth Uhr, by newspaper reports, was alleged to have shot 59 blacks on the frontier, which was denied. He was subsequently allowed to resign. Harvey Fitzgerald flogged a gin for failing to obey a police direction. He was allowed to resign and then reinstated to gold escort duties. Finally, John Carroll was charged with the murder of trooper Echo but the charge was dismissed which resulted in his dismissal from the native police.

Apart from allegations of murder and excessive force by native police against Aborigines, the force also suffered from its fair share of incompetent officers. Two are worthy of mention, Charles Blakeney and Charles Browne. Blakeney is notable because a detailed inquiry was made into his malingering, which has been of some use in understanding the operational activities of the native police. Charles Browne's case is of marginal interest in that it shows how partial the system was in relation to the termination of contracts of service. Most of those officers dismissed from the force would have under modern legislation and concepts of natural justice received unfair dismissal payments. What conclusions can be drawn from this small sample of alleged transgressions by these officers of native police, not much at all?

⁵⁶⁹ Colonial Secretary, Hansard LA 4 October 1867 p 333.

The Black Armband Brigade classify all native police shootings of myall blacks as police murders with one unit of the Brigade, Evans and Ørsted-Jensen, alleging over 40,000 murders carried out by the native police.⁵⁷⁰ Another cadre alleges that current research has escalated the figure to 101,163.⁵⁷¹ The fact that casualty figures and body-counts have been emotive issues exploited by some of the best propagandists and fake-news scammers in history has not triggered their better judgment. They continue to luxuriate in their undergraduate ebullience for all things absurd.

The flaw in their argument is this. The Black Armband Brigade argues that Aborigines were conducting a just war of resistance against the illegal invasion of their country, and that they were killed off in their thousands by the white invaders. However, the white invaders employed Aborigines as mercenaries to fight their war of conquest and it was these same mercenaries who actually killed the resisting Aborigines not the whites. Then to counter this fact, which they don't dispute, the Black Armband Brigade says that the traitorous Aborigines were pressed or conscripted against their will and were unwilling to fight on the side of the whites. The facts are that each patrol of Native Police consisted of eight armed aboriginal troopers with one white sub-inspector, who rode behind the troop in case of treachery. Frederick Walker said:

I have no legal power to keep 96 men in the Queen's service. There is nothing to prevent them leaving that service at a moment. They are held and kept by the ties of gratitude to the government that has treated them so well and how can you wonder at their representing this to others.⁵⁷²

Officer Separation from Native Police

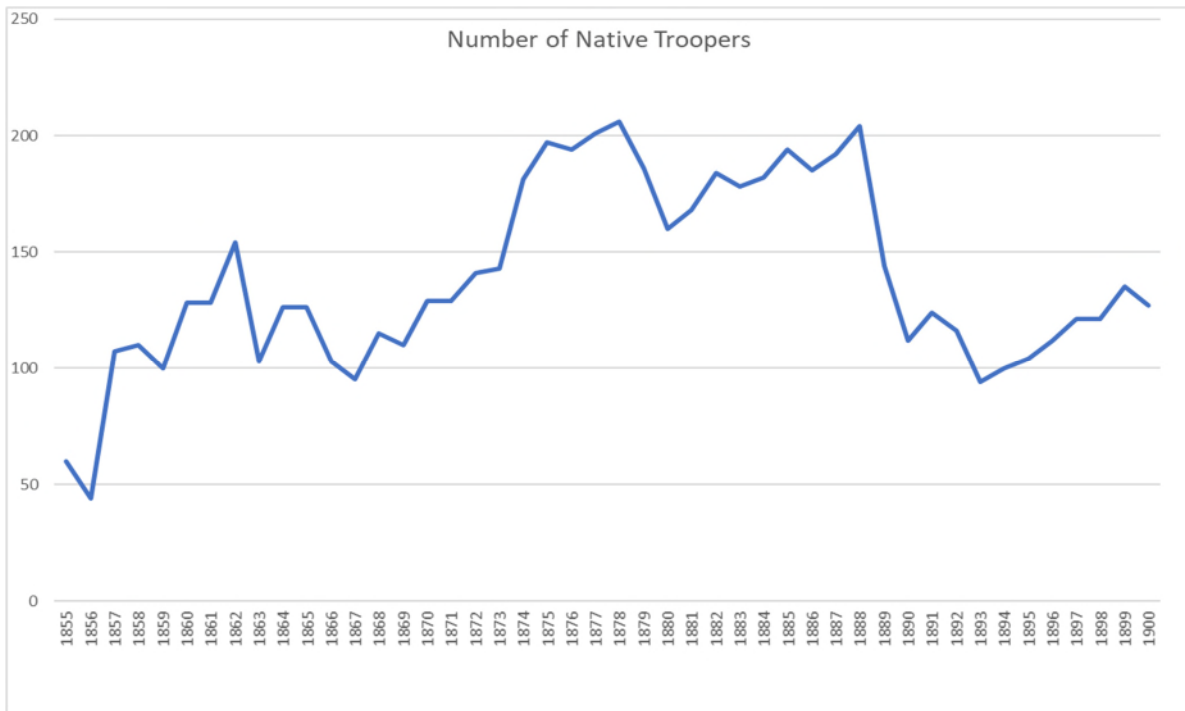
Officer	Reason	Date	Remarks
Bligh John	Killed a black at Maryborough	1860	Justified, no action
Murray John	Manumbar killings	1861	Resigned 1870 at Cardwell-drunkenness
Wheeler Frederick	Dugandan 2 killed	1861	Reprimanded
	Fassifern 3 killed	1861	As above
	Killed Aborigine by flogging	1876	Failed to appear at Trial for murder
Powell FT	Killed Gulliver escaping custody	1861	Justified
Richardson Marmaduke	Killed Wallace at Yatton	1863	Dismissed
Harris Joseph D	Killed Jemmy	1863	Dismissed
Aubin Myrtil	Morinish killings	1867	Dismissed
Blakeney Charles	Malingering	1866	Dismissed
Uhr Wentworth	Shooting 59 blacks	1868	Reduced in rank and allowed to resigned
Fitzgerald Harvey	Flogged a gin	1876	Resigned, reinstated to gold escort
Browne Charles	Incompetence	1877	Directed to resign
Carroll John	Killed Echo	1876	Dismissed

⁵⁷⁰ Evans and Ørsted-Jensen, "I Cannot Say the Numbers that were Killed." See p 77 above, where I have discussed this more fully.

⁵⁷¹ Heather Burke, Bryce Barker, Lynley Wallis, Sarah Craig & Michelle Combo (2020): Betwixt and Between: Trauma, Survival and the Aboriginal Troopers of the Queensland Native Mounted Police, Journal of Genocide Research, DOI: 10.1080/14623528.2020.1735147.

⁵⁷² F. Walker, Callandoon 28 August 1852 to Colonial Secretary, see Dillon, Frederick Walker 2018, p 419.

Queensland Native Police



The above graph gives an indication of the nominal strength of the troopers available for patrol activities. What the actual operational strength of the detachments at camp level was is unknown. Like all organisations, the actual workforce attendance figures depend on sickness, absenteeism, leave, transfers, deaths, and desertions. Moreover, as I have been at pains to demonstrate, the native police were on many occasions taken away from patrol activities for search and rescue, trailblazing, exploration, gold escort, non-aboriginal criminal details and sundry other activities. Commissioner Seymour put it this way:

The aboriginal population has been estimated at 50,000; to check the outrages of these aborigines one hundred and fifty (150) native troopers are allowed, a force scarcely adequate to cope with such numbers, but still their services have been such as to prevent great murders and bloodshed.⁵⁷³

Résumé de la brigade brassard noir.

W. Stanner made the following observation:

The blacks have never been able to make a formal protest, except by an occasional spear. They have never been able to stir and hold any lasting interest in their plight. They themselves have no notion of tribal tragedy on a national scale, nor perhaps would it interest them if they had. Most of their interests and loyalties are narrowly tribal. The petition sent to the King by eighteen hundred civilised natives in 1937, asking to be saved from extinction and given political representation in Parliament, was the only articulate national plea they have yet made on their own behalf, and they were almost certainly prompted to it.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷³ The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Police for 1872 was presented on 15 January 1873.

⁵⁷⁴ WHITE MAN GOT NO DREAMING Essays 1938-1973 by W. E. H. Stanner Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1979 p 4.

On the other hand, C. D. Rowley said:

Australian historians have paid little attention to the Aboriginal groups' resistance to white settlement. We are not yet in any position to assess the full significance of what appears, from the records, as somewhat sporadic and periodic. Yet there is, in my own view and from a detailed examination of evidence in one region (see ch. 7), enough to describe it in some regions as a series of deliberate, if limited, guerrilla skirmishes. (Aboriginal society lacked the type of organisation which makes possible a campaign of warfare.) This is hard to recognise because, with the proclamation of sovereignty over all lands in a colony and the consequent definition of such lands as Crown lands, the resistance of the dwellers thereon to officials of the Crown such as the police (including the Native Police) cannot appear in the official reports as frontier war. If not rebellion, it becomes criminal activity of some convenient kind—for both white and black. The real problem for the colonial government then became one of keeping the peace between two kinds of British subjects—the whites and the blacks.⁵⁷⁵

After the election of Whitlam, a tsunami of social justice warriors, known as the Black Armband Brigade, crashed onto the shores of middle-class, white Australia and tumbled and rumbled and pummelled them with accusations that they were the not the beneficiaries of a benign, heroic legacy of sound economic management; but the offspring of a gang of murderous cutthroats, who had seized Aboriginal land by murder and mayhem, exploited their natural resources without compensation, degraded the Aborigines with diseases, alcohol and opium, and then stole their children.

Jonathan Richards said:

the Native Police, the infamous force created to kill Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland. The force operated as part of a widespread campaign of frontier racial violence in colonial Australia in general, and in Queensland in particular.

In Queensland, the Native Police played a major role in the dispossession of Aboriginal people from their land, the almost complete destruction of Aboriginal law, and the disintegration of Aboriginal families. As a major instrument of colonial authority and order, the Native Police of Queensland were, for Aboriginal peoples, the symbol of Native policy, invasion and dispossession throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷⁶

Libby Connors:

The Native Police Force, its function was one of terror, intimidation and harassment of the Aboriginal population.

Punitive operations were being carried out by the Native Police, regardless of the law and with the corroboration of government officials and frontier magistrates, throughout this period.

Not only was this war undeclared, it was not being waged according to any of the established rules of warfare. This was a conquest which involved the killing of women, children and the infirm, and in which prisoners could be shot in custody. There was no established code governing the rights of the participants in this struggle. Not only were the troopers subjected to a severe discipline, without reference to any tribunal, but their wives and the women who accompanied them were also subjected to brutal floggings.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ THE DESTRUCTION OF ABORIGINAL SOCIETY, by C. D. Rowley, ANU Press, 1970, pp 5 & 6.

⁵⁷⁶ The Secret War: A True History of Queensland's Native Police, Jonathan Richards Univ. of Queensland Press, 2017 p4 & 5.

⁵⁷⁷ THE "BIRTH OF THE PRISON" AND THE DEATH OF CONVICTISM The operation of the law in pre-separation Queensland 1839 to 1859 by Libby Connors degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the History Department at the University of Queensland. 1990, pp 6, 246 & 228.

Timothy Bottoms:

the Queensland Native Mounted Police was far more prominent and lethal than in other Australian colonies. They were used as death squads to remove the Aboriginal inhabitants who were considered an impediment to the squatters and settlers' land-grabs.⁵⁷⁸

Ray Gibbons:

If Herbert was the father of Queensland ethnic cleansing policy (later assumed in short order by McKenzie and then Macalister), Seymour was the persevering architect. The police commissioner and architect of Queensland's ethnic cleansing policy from 1864 to 1895 was David Seymour.⁵⁷⁹

Heather Burke et al:

The Force was responsible for a host of devastating impacts on Aboriginal communities, including the killing of Aboriginal men, women, and children, the kidnapping of children and young adults, the sexual exploitation of women, physical displacement, and the disruption of traditional practices.⁵⁸⁰

The above comments are not helpful but mimic the aristarch of all things white and British, Paul Keating. So, poor is the pupil who does not surpass his master.

And, as I say, the starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with that act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing.

We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life.

We brought the diseases. The alcohol.

We committed the murders.

We took the children from their mothers.

We practised discrimination and exclusion.

It was our ignorance and our prejudice.

And our failure to imagine these things being done to us.

With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds.

We failed to ask - how would I feel if this were done to me?

As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us.⁵⁸¹

Each of the above quotes should not be treated as sound conclusions drawn from impartial research but are, in reality, compulsory loyalty statements made as a public display of their commitment to the cause and a declaration of their support for leftist's ideology. Without these shibboleths, none of them would have been published.⁵⁸² Their method of history is to start with leftist concepts of colonialism and then descend onto the field of study and cherry-pick the sources for data in support of their pre-determined hypothesis. Rather than to commence at ground level

⁵⁷⁸ Conspiracy of Silence Queensland's frontier killing times, Timothy Bottoms, Allen & Unwin, 2013 p 5.

⁵⁷⁹ In Search of History: The Massacre at Murdering Creek, Ray Gibbons (2015), pp 102 & 255.

⁵⁸⁰ Heather Burke, Bryce Barker, Lynley Wallis, Sarah Craig & Michelle Combo (2020): Betwixt and Between: Trauma, Survival and the Aboriginal Troopers of the Queensland Native Mounted Police, Journal of Genocide Research, DOI: 10.1080/14623528.2020.1735147 p 2.

⁵⁸¹ Redfern Speech (Year for the World's Indigenous People) – Delivered in Redfern Park by Prime Minister Paul Keating, 10 December 1992.

⁵⁸² See University of NSW, Indigenous Teaching. More appropriate: Invasion, Colonisation, Occupation. Australia was not settled peacefully, it was invaded, occupied and colonised. Describing the arrival of the Europeans as a "settlement" attempts to view Australian history from the shores of England rather than the shores of Australia.

with actual events and their contemporary social and political environment from which a possible conclusion or hypothesis might be made or drawn.

How are we to characterise the myall, uncontacted Aborigines? They were, amongst themselves, disparate warring tribes, who did not participate in any way, shape, or form in the society of Queensland. They did not vote, pay taxes or acknowledge the colony or government of Queensland. However, they were deemed to be British subjects which brought them within the jurisdiction of the municipal laws of the colony for their protection,⁵⁸³ but should they breach the law they would render themselves liable to the penalties of the law. They lived and operated outside the settled limits of the colony; and when citizens of Queensland settled in the unsettled/outside areas of the colony, the settlers were invariably attacked by myall Aborigines and killed, their goods taken and their bodies eaten.

What was the nature of the Native Police? They were an itinerant unit of police whose operational effectiveness rested on the native troopers under the direction and supervision of a white officer. Their primary duty was to patrol the particular police district assigned to them for the purposes of keeping the peace and good order of the district. Their camps or bivouacs were temporary and not fortified. The Native Police did not have intelligence or forward planning functions, nor did it have a role or function in developing communications or exchange with uncontacted or myall Aborigines. The force was reactive in character with a dominant role of protection and the immediate apprehension of offending myall blacks for murder and killing livestock, which often led to conflict between the police and Aborigines.⁵⁸⁴

The criminal justice system of the nineteenth century made provision for the execution of persons convicted of the felonies of murder, rape and robbery under arms. The Aborigines in their collisions with white settlers invariably robbed settlers whilst armed and in the course of the robbery or its aftermath murdered the settlers. On conviction, these same Aborigines would have been executed. Police sent out to prevent these collisions were fully instructed on what they might do in confronting these Aborigines and to that end I draw the reader's attention to the following document published in the Queensland Police Gazette of August 1864:

The following Letter from the Honourable the Attorney-General, is published for the instruction of the Police:

Attorney-General's Department,
Brisbane, 2nd August, 1864.

To the Commissioner of Police.

Sir, In order that constables may fully understand the duties imposed upon them in arresting persons charged with felony, I do myself the honour to draw your attention to the following opinion upon this subject, an opinion of Mr. Martin, Attorney-General of New South Wales, in which I concur:

If a constable endeavours to apprehend a person who has committed a felony, or a person whom he is by a proper warrant authorised to apprehend for felony, and such person flees, knowing the intention to arrest for such felony, and with a view to prevent such arrest, he may be lawfully killed, provided he cannot be otherwise apprehended; at what particular period of a struggle or pursuit the impossibility of overtaking the person fleeing becomes manifest must depend on the circumstances of each case. If the constable is better mounted than the person whom he is endeavouring to apprehend, or the place where the parties are is such that assistance is likely to be obtained before the escape can be fully effected, or if in any other way there is reasonable ground for supposing that

⁵⁸³The Black Armband Brigade have difficulty understanding this concept. If the Aborigines did not have the protection of the law, then that would mean they were outside the law and if they were outside the law, it would be lawful for anyone to slay them like a wolf, *caput lupinum*, see Blackstone Vol. IV p 314.

⁵⁸⁴ The reader is invited to re-read pp 153 & 154 above.

the arrest can be accomplished in that particular pursuit, the officer ought not in any of those cases to take life. He is not, however, bound to let a felon, or person whom he is authorised by warrant to arrest for felony, escape from him because he may have good reason to think that he can find him easily at some other time. It is his duty to arrest the person whom he is so authorised or commanded to arrest as soon as he sees him, and if he cannot otherwise overtake him, he may kill him. Constables ought in all cases to be extremely cautious in resorting to such extreme steps; but when the necessity arises, they must perform their duty, and the law will protect them. I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obedient servant, Ratcliffe Pring, Attorney-General.

The law enforcement code of that time clearly saw the death of a felon escaping police apprehension as a natural and legitimate consequence of his failure to submit to judicial process. The reader needs to further appreciate that flight by a suspect has always been seen as evidence of guilt. Modern commentators have a great weakness for judging historical events by modern standards and today's technology.

Let us take one of these shibboleths chanted by the Black Armband Brigade. Death squads are as good a place to start as any other tool of extermination. The trouble is that they all assume an air of unreality so that they never become items of substance. The Tonton Macoute under Papa Doc, the Savak under the Shah of Iran, frightening entities but are there any facts and figures, or records of their doings? They remain shadowy organisations best left to the spy genre of Hollywood movies. In my Introduction, I said some commentators sought to equate the Queensland Native Police with the Einsatzgruppen. An organisation setup to prepare Russian territory taken by the Wehrmacht during Operation Barbarossa for political administration. There were four Einsatzgruppe units. Their orders were to execute Communist Party functionaries, Soviet officials, and political commissars, as well as Jewish men, women, and children. Now there may be a rational reason to eliminate communist officials for if they were suffered to go at large, they may have subsequently acted against the newly installed German administration of the occupied lands, but the killing of Jews had no justification whatsoever. They were to be eliminated for one reason only and that was because they were Jews. To ensure they only collected Jews for execution, each Einsatzgruppe had the Jews go through a process of registration for re-settlement; the identification of the Jews was carried out by the Jews themselves, since the registration was handled by a Jewish Council of Elders. They were then taken to a place of execution and shot. Now the reason the Einsatzgruppe units can be identified along with their operational activities and numbers killed was because the Germans kept impeccable written records and the Chief of Einsatzgruppe D, Otto Ohlendorf gave full and frank evidence when he was tried before the Nuremberg Tribunal. He was subsequently convicted and hanged on 8 June 1951.

Comparison of Native Police and Einsatzgruppen

Particulars	Native Police	Einsatzgruppen
State sponsored	Yes	Yes
Political Situation	Peace time	Declared State of War
Area of activities	Operated in unsettled areas of the colony	Operated in conquered territory
Type of Force	Reactive	Pre-emptive
Arms	Single shot breech-loading rifle	Machine guns
Stated Aim	To protect settlers	To eliminate Jews, Commissars
Modus Operandi	The apprehension or dispersal of myall Aborigines who murdered settlers & killed livestock	Jews after registration transported to a place of execution and shot by firing squad

Of course, the more docile of the Black Armband Brigade eschew extremist statements like genocide and death squads and seek to put a silk finish to their leftist polemic by pseudo logic and

argue that in reality, the Aborigines were fighting a guerrilla war against the white invaders. This drivel is overlaid with all the derring-do of Boys' Own adventures, but is nothing more than throwing the mantle of a novel term (guerrilla) around an old and well-known offence of brigandage, in the expectation that a legalizing effect will result from the adoption of a new word having a technical sound. While in truth the Aborigines were, according to the common law not of war, but that of armed robbers, against whom every person was permitted, or was in duty bound, to use all the means of defence at his disposal.

I give the last word to Mr. W. E. Parry-Okeden, Commissioner of Police:

Among the best, most valued, and trusted officers and sub-officers now serving under me, are many who spent long years in the native police, with credit to themselves and the force. The first desideratum in any scheme for bettering the blacks is to establish friendly relations between those who are wild and uncivilised and the whites, thus begetting mutual confidence and trust; and the wild or "Myall" aborigines are naturally trusting, though among their other characteristics they are impulsive, fickle, cunning, and very treacherous. Friendly relations can only be established by affording equal protection, and dealing out even-handed justice to both races. In working this out I hold there is no such potent factor ready to hand, or indeed anywhere else, as native troopers properly officered, controlled, and worked. The whole question of working native troopers, for good or bad, is a matter of leadership, control, discipline. To condemn the native police as unfit to be brought into contact in any way with their fellows, because in the past under some cruel, cowardly, or inefficient officer they have done wrong, is as absurd as it would be to wilfully smash your best rifle on the eve of a rifle-shooting contest because in the past it had fallen into the hands of a fool, madman, or murderer, who had worked harm with it.

It is a well-known fact that the only control possible to be obtained at the outset and maintained over wild or uncivilised blacks is by the exercise and exhibition of superior force by people whom they recognise as capable of competing with them in their own tactics, tracking, bush cunning, lore or living, and by whom, in the fastnesses of their native mountains, scrubs, or mangrove swamps they know they can be followed and found when "wanted." The only white men in the police at the present time at all capable of undertaking, even in a very modified degree, such work, are those few who have gained experience by service in the native police, and by association with the native troopers, and observation of their methods and tactics.

I consider strong native police detachments a necessity. An isolated tracker here and there at stations far apart, with a few white policemen, who would, because of the climate, fever, &c., have to be continually changed, and who would from the same causes and from the nature of their work be prohibited from family life, would be worse than useless; and I regard the idea as wholly impracticable and unadapted to prevailing circumstances.⁵⁸⁵



⁵⁸⁵ NORTH QUEENSLAND ABORIGINES AND NATIVE POLICE. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS. Brisbane Courier 16 April 1897 p 6.



Courtesy of QSL

John O'Connell Bligh
Commandant of Native Police 1861 to 1863

Appendix A

NOTICE-ABORIGINES

Colonial Secretary's Office

21 May 1839

His Excellency the Governor desires to draw the attention of owners of Stock throughout the Colony and of the Public in general, to the extensive powers which by an Act passed in a recent extraordinary Session of the Legislative Council (Crown Lands Unauthorised Occupation Act 2 Vic., No 27) are now vested in the Commissioners of Lands acting beyond the boundaries of location, as well as to the fact that these Commissioners are now magistrates of the territory; and as one of the principal objects which the Council had in view in passing the Act referred to, was to put a stop to the atrocities which have of late been so extensively committed beyond the boundaries, both by the Aborigines and on them, His Excellency deems the present a proper occasion to notify to the Public that he has received distinct instructions from His Majesty's Government to cause an inquest or enquiry to be instituted in every case wherein any the Aboriginal Inhabitants may have come to a violent death in consequence of a collision with white men; and that His Excellency is determined to make no distinction in such cases, whether the aggressors or parties injured be of one or the other race or colour, but to bring all, as far as may be in his power, to equal and indiscriminate justice. As human beings partaking of our common nature, as the Aboriginal possessors of the soil from which the wealth of the country has been principally derived, and as subjects of the Queen, whose authority extends over every part of New Holland, the natives of the colony have an equal right with people of European origin to the protection and assistance of the law of England.

To allow either to injure or oppress the other, or to permit the stronger to regard the weaker party as aliens with whom a war can exist, and against whom they may exercise belligerent rights, is no less inconsistent with the spirit of that law, than it is at variance with the dictates of justice and humanity.

The duties of the Commissioners of Crown Lands in respect to the Aborigines will be to cultivate at all times an amicable intercourse with them, to assist them in obtaining redress for any wrong which they may have been exposed, and particularly to prevent any interference on the part of white men with their women. On the other hand, they will make known to them the penalties to which they become liable by any act of aggression on the persons or properties of the colonist. They will endeavour to induce the chiefs in their respective districts to make themselves responsible for the good conduct of their tribes, and they will use every means in their power to acquire such personal influence over them, as may either prevent aggression or ensure the immediate surrender of the parties who may be guilty of it

His Excellency thinks it right, further to inform the Public, that each succeeding despatch from Secretary of State, marks in an increasing degree the importance which Her Majesty's Government, and no less the Parliament and the people of Great Britain, attach to the just and humane treatment the Aborigines of this country; and to declare earnestly, and solemnly, his deep conviction that there is no subject or matter whatsoever in which the interest as well as the honour of the colonists are more essentially concerned. By His Excellency's Command, E Deas Thomson.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁶ ABORIGINES (AUSTRALIAN COLONIES), Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 9 August 1844, p 20.

Standing Orders for the Border Police.

1. Every individual employed in the border police is expected to pay implicit obedience to the orders of the commissioner, in the same way as troopers of the mounted police, or soldiers in any regiment of the line, are bound to obey the orders of their commanding officer.
2. Non-commissioned officers and troopers of the mounted police are in an equal degree bound to pay implicit obedience to the Crown commissioner during the time they are placed under his orders.
8. The commissioner of each district will keep a very accurate register of the conduct of every man who is attached to him, and will report monthly the behaviour of each individual, for the Governor's information.
4. The Governor will consider good conduct in the border police to constitute the greatest recommendation which any man can have in this country to his favourable notice, and he will be happy to grant the highest rewards which it is in his power to bestow, and at the earliest periods, which he is by law or regulation empowered to grant them.
5. On the other hand, the Governor desires it to be distinctly understood that he will instantly remove from the border police any man of whom he may receive an unfavourable report; and that any person removed for his misconduct will be retained in Hyde Park Barracks, or in government employment at some other station, for the whole of the time he may have to serve in the colony.
6. The means by which every border policeman will have it most in his power to obtain the approval and favourable consideration of the Governor will be by behaving in a kind and humane manner to the natives, and by endeavouring to gain their confidence and esteem, as well as to civilize and improve them.
7. The offences, on the other hand, which the Governor will never overlook or forgive are, any harsh or unkind treatment, or ill usage of the natives; any attempt to teach them bad language, or to lead them into vicious practices, or to mock or laugh at them.
8. Any person whatsoever giving or offering to give spirits to a native, or encouraging in any way a native to drink spirits, will be immediately dismissed.
9. Any person whatsoever having improper intercourse, or attempting to have improper intercourse with a female native, even with her own consent or the consent of her friends, will in like manner be immediately dismissed, and otherwise punished to the extent of the Governor's power.
10. The troopers of the mounted police attached to the border police will, for the first three months, act as non-commissioned officers.
11. The commissioners will subsequently recommend the best-behaved men to succeed them; and should there be none whom they can recommend, they will report the circumstance, in order that deserving men from other districts may be sent to them.
12. These orders are to be read at least once a month to every man in the border police by the commissioner of the district.

With a view to have a mark by which each man and horse belonging to the border police may be easily distinguishable, it is proposed to assign particular letters to each district; Viz.

Port Macquarie, P. M.	Lochlan, L.
New England, N. E.	Murrumbidgee, M. E.
Liverpool Plains, L. P.	Monaroo, M. O.
Bligh, B.	Port Phillip, P. P.
Wellington, W.	

Each man and horse is also to be numbered, commencing with a new arithmetical series for each district; each man is to have sown into his cap, in legible characters, the letter of his division, and

his own number, and also on the right arm of the coat. Every article of dress and equipment is also to be similarly marked, but not in such a manner as to be apparent except on examination. The horses are each to be named, and branded with a Crown on the right shoulder, and the letters of the district, with its own number on the left shoulder. Horses bought to replace others are to be numbered with a continuation of the arithmetical series after the last branded.

A return is to be sent in half-yearly of the state of the horses, with columns, showing the name, date of purchase, from whom purchased, members of the Board who approved the purchase, colour, age, description, old brand, government brand, peculiar marks, and present state.⁵⁸⁷

E. V. MORISSET — INSTRUCTIONS OF COMMANDANT TO OFFICERS AND CAMP SERGEANTS OF NATIVE POLICE.

Head Quarters, Maryborough, Wide Bay,
January, 1858.

1st. The officers in charge of divisions or detachments will be careful that under no circumstances are blacks, not being troopers, to be allowed into the Police Camp, and will use every exertion to prevent the troopers from having any communication whatever with the Aborigines of the district in which they may be stationed, or through which they may be passing.

2nd. Every such officer will keep a public journal of all incidents happening in the course of public duty, whether in patrol or in camp, in order that he may at any time be able to furnish the Commandant with a report of the daily duty performed by himself or others of his division or detachment, or of any circumstances that may have occurred within his district, in which he or they may have acted in his or their official capacity.

3rd They will be particular in collecting and forwarding to the Commandant's Office, at the conclusion of each month, all accounts against their own, or any other outstanding accounts belonging to any other division or detachment that may have passed through their district; but the latter are not to be entered on their own Divisional Abstract, but on a separate one. These accounts must be made out on proper vouchers, and the officers must be very careful that the proper signatures are attached thereto.

4th They will be held responsible for the general duty of their divisional detachment and the proper fulfilment of the separate duties by the subordinate officers under their command.

5th. They will be careful to instruct their Camp Sergeants as to the duties they will be required to perform, which are as follows, viz.—

1. To take charge of the Stores, and serve out Rations to the troopers, night and morning. They will be held responsible for all Stores placed under their charge, and will keep a strict account of all Stores and Rations issued to the division or detachment, and which will be laid before the officer in charge at any time he may wish to inspect the same.

2. To drill the troopers every day they are in camp until they are perfect in their exercise, mounted and on foot.

3 The Sergeants will be responsible for the discipline of the Camp during the absence of the Officer, and will perform any camp duties which may be necessary under the order of the Officer in command.

6th Officers, sergeants, and Troopers will at all times wear correct uniform when on parade, patrol, or other duty, and on this point, it is particularly necessary that the Officers should be careful in shewing a proper example, as thorough cleanliness in person, clothing,

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., p 24.

and accoutrements must be rendered compulsory on the part of the troopers, every inducement should be held out to them to assume a smart and soldierlike appearance.

7th. In no case are any of the Native Troopers to be allowed to take spirits from anyone except their Officer, or medical man in case of sickness.

8th. No cartridges are to be expended by the troopers without the orders of their Officers.

9th. The whole of the horses to be mustered regularly every morning by the troopers in turn, and a note to be made in the Officer's journal of any horses absent; their backs must be carefully attended to, and always washed upon the troopers dismounting, and well rubbed down before saddling; the saddles to be examined frequently by the Officer in charge, and the saddle-cloths and girths kept clean. The troop horses are on no account to be used by the Officers.

10th. It is the duty of the Officers at all times and opportunities to disperse any large assemblage of blacks; such meetings, if not prevented, invariably lead to depredations or murder; and nothing but the mistaken kindness of the Officers in command inspired the blacks with sufficient confidence to commit the late fearful outrages on the Dawson River. The Officers will therefore see the necessity of teaching the aborigines that no outrage or depredation shall be committed with impunity—but on the contrary, retributive justice shall speedily follow the Commission of crime; nevertheless the Officers will be careful in receiving reports against the blacks, as it frequently happens that, mistakes are made as to the identity of the aggressors. In case of any collision with the aborigines a report is to be forwarded to the Commandant without delay. (signed) E. V. MORISSET, Commandant Native Police.⁵⁸⁸



S. T. Gill, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

⁵⁸⁸ Qld Select Committee on the Native Police Force, 1861 p 151.

Appendix B

Legislative Basis of the Queensland Police.

Police Act of 1838, Police Act of 1848 (by virtue of Letter Patent erecting the colony of Queensland) and the Queensland Police Act of 1863 (27 Vic. No. 11) assented to 21st September 1863.

Section 3 of the Police Act of 1863:

... Commissioner of Police shall under the direction of the Colonial Secretary be charged with the superintendence of the Police Force of the whole colony including the Native Police Force;

And section 33 of the Police Act of 1863:

There shall continue to be a Native Police Force and it shall be lawful for the Governor with the advice of the Executive Council to make regulations for the general government and discipline of the Native Police Force of the colony and all such regulations when published in the Gazette shall have the force of the law and copies thereof shall be laid before both houses of the legislature forthwith if sitting and if not within fourteen days after the opening of the next Session.

Native Police Regulations as published in Queensland Government Gazette Vol. VII. 10 March 1866. [No. 28.] pp 258-261

THE following instructions are published for the information and guidance of the officers of the Native Mounted Police Force.

Rule 1 not included.

2. It is impossible to give precise directions for the execution of every duty which the force may be required to perform, or to anticipate every difficulty which its members may have to encounter, as, from the nature of the service, its duties must vary, and consequently the mode of execution must vary with them, and be directed by the circumstances of each particular case. Each member of the force should therefore endeavour to become acquainted with the nature of every duty which he may be called on to perform, and by zeal, energy, discretion, and intelligence, make every effort to supply the unavoidable deficiency in general instructions.

3. The officers will, however, be held strictly responsible for the execution and observance of all orders and regulations; for any deviation from which, and for their own acts and orders in such cases as may not or cannot be provided for by these instructions, they will be held responsible.

4. In the performance of their duty they are distinctly to understand that their efforts should be principally directed to the prevention of crime, which will tend far more effectively towards the security of person and property than the punishment of those who have violated the laws; and the very best evidence that can be given of their efficiency will be the absence of crime in their districts.

5. All officers are studiously to observe a strict neutrality in political matters.

6. Every officer of the Native Mounted Police Force should bear constantly in mind how essential it is to cultivate a proper regard for the honour and respectability of the force, and should be governed by the principle that the more they can raise those above or below them

in public estimation, the more they elevate their own official position, and with it the general character of the force.

7. All commands devolve on the senior officer present. As the responsibility attaching to a superior may at any time devolve on the next in rank, it is essential that the members of each grade be acquainted with the duties that circumstances may call on them to discharge, in order to guard against injury to the public service.

8. Every subordinate is to receive the lawful commands of his superior with deference and respect and to execute them to the best of his power; and every superior, in his turn, is to give his orders in the language of moderation and of regard to the feelings of those under his command.

9. The obedience and respect which are here required must be observed throughout the force generally, and not be understood in any partial or confined sense.

10. The conditions of admission into the force are stated here that no reason for complaint may exist upon their being enforced. It is to be understood at the same time that the power is reserved to the Commissioner, subject to the approbation of His Excellency the Governor in Council, to alter or amend any of these conditions, and also to make such new rules as may be found expedient: –

(1) Every officer must devote his whole time to the service.

(2) He shall serve and reside wherever he is ordered.

(3) He shall promptly obey all lawful orders which he may receive from the persons placed in authority over him.

(4) He shall conform himself to all the regulations which may be made from time to time for the good of the service.

(5) Three months' notice of his intention to resign his appointment must be given to the Commissioner; and he shall, on no account, absent himself from his station, unless specially permitted by writing under the hand of his immediate commanding officer.

(6) Any officer who shall be dismissed cannot again be admitted into the Police Force, nor any other branch of the Government service.

(7) Every officer shall, before leaving the service, deliver up all Government property that may be in his charge; and any such property that may have been lost or damaged by the neglect of the officer in whose charge it was, will be made good by deduction from his pay.

11. The officers are not to allow any person unconnected with the Native Police Force to interfere with or accompany them, or give orders to any of the troopers under their command.

12. They must be very careful of the health of their men; not to allow them to wear their jackets in hot weather; not to allow them to put on their newly-washed clothes before they are dry; nor to camp in low spots conducive to fever and ague; nor to camp upon ground wet from rain, but cause them to strip bark to put under them.

13. The arms, clothes, and accoutrements must be inspected as often as possible. No excuse will ever be admitted for dirty arms or accoutrements, as with a very little trouble they are easily kept clean.

14. Whenever an opportunity occurs, such as a day or two's rest, or a short stage, the officers are to practice the troopers in the usual drill and no other.

15. Before leaving the police station, the officer in command will see that such clothing as may not be wanted on patrol is carefully put away.

16. A daily account of all rations received and issued will be kept in a book supplied for the purpose.

17. The object in sending out patrol parties is principally that the hostile blacks, from the frequent visits of the police, may be deterred from murder and felony – this is the meaning of a preventive force.

18. It is however certain that, occasionally, the officers will have to endeavour to apprehend persons who have committed felony. When the officer holds a warrant, his duty is very clear if he can identify the individual named therein, or has reasonable grounds to believe he can do so; and if he meets with resistance in the execution of such warrant, he is justified in making use of force against the man he wishes to apprehend, and any person assisting him. When he holds no warrant, if he can prove that a felony has been committed, and that he has reasonable cause to suspect an individual, he is justified in apprehending him, and using force if resisted. With white persons it is not difficult to prove all this, but blacks are so much alike, and the evidence is generally so faulty, that officers must be very cautious. It has been frequently found that the statements made by individuals differed very widely from the affidavits when made on oath by the same persons. When an officer sees a felony or an assault being committed, as a matter of course, he is obliged to take all offenders in charge. In every case the same law applies to blacks as to whites, and if the officers go beyond the law they do so at their own risk. The blacks cannot be considered as men armed for illegal purposes, because their weapons are their principal means of obtaining food.

19. The officers must be very particular in always avoiding indiscreet discussions.

20. Upon returning from patrol, officers in charge of parties will report to the officer in command of the district everything concerning any collision that may have taken place, and given him full information, in order that he may collect any necessary evidence.

21. When a trooper is transferred, a return is to be sent with him, signed by the officer who sends him, of the arms, accoutrements, clothing, etc sent with him; this return is to be countersigned by the officer to whom the trooper is sent, and by him forwarded to the Inspector of the district.

22. Officers in charge of districts and detachments will be careful that under no circumstances are blacks, not being troopers, to be allowed in the police camp; and they will use every exertion to prevent the troopers from having any communication whatever with the aborigines of the district in which they may be stationed, or through which they may be passing; they will also be held responsible that no trooper keeps a gin without permission from head-quarters.

23. Every officer will keep a journal of all incidents happening in the course of public duty, whether during patrol or in camp, and of any circumstances that may have occurred within his district, in which he may have acted in his official capacity. He will also keep a diary of the duty performed on patrol, stating time of arrival at and departure from each station he may visit, to which, when possible, he will obtain the signature of the proprietor or person in charge.

24. He will be particular in collecting and forwarding, at the close of each month or quarter, all accounts against his own, or any outstanding accounts belonging to any other detachment that may have passed through his district; the accounts must be made out on proper vouchers, and officers must be very careful that all the necessary signatures are attached thereto.

25. He will be held responsible for the general duty of his detachment and the proper fulfilment of the separate duties of the subordinate officers under his command.

26. He will be careful to instruct his acting Sub-Inspectors as to the duties they will be required to perform, which are principally as follows:

(1) To take charge of the stores, and serve out rations to the troopers, night and morning, and keep a strict account of all stores and rations issued to the detachment, to be laid before the officer in charge at any time he may wish to inspect the same.

(2) To drill the troopers every day they are in camp, until they are perfect in their exercise, mounted or on foot.

(3) And perform any camp duties which may be considered necessary by the officer in command.

27. Officers and troopers will at all times wear correct uniform when on parade, patrol, or other duty; and in this respect, it is particularly necessary that the officers should be careful in showing a proper example; as through cleanliness in person, clothing and accoutrements must be rendered compulsory on the part of the troopers, every inducement should be held out to them to assume a smart and soldierlike appearance.

28. In no case are any of the native troopers to be allowed to take spirits from any one, except their officer or medical man in case of sickness.

29. No cartridges are to be expended by the troopers without the orders of their officers.

30. The whole of the horses are to be mustered regularly every morning by the troopers in turn, and a note to be made in the officer's journal of any horses absent; their backs must be carefully attended to, and should always be washed upon the troopers dismounting, and well rubbed down before saddling; the saddles should be examined frequently by the officer in charge, and the saddle cloths and girths kept clean.

31. It is the duty of the officers, at all times and opportunities, to disperse any large assembly of blacks without unnecessary violence; such meetings frequently lead to depredations and murder, and mistaken kindness or misbehaviour of the officers in command only inspire the blacks with sufficient confidence to commit outrages. The officers will, therefore, see the necessity of teaching the aborigines that no outrage or depredation shall be committed with impunity, but, on the contrary, that retributive justice will speedily follow the commission of crime; nevertheless, the officers will be careful in receiving reports against the blacks, as it frequently happens that mistakes are made as to the identity of the aggressors. In case of any collision with the aborigines a report is to be forwarded to the Commissioner without delay.

32. Officers in charge of districts and detachments will make themselves, as soon as possible, acquainted with the general features of the country in their respective districts and vicinities, so as to enable them to take advantage of any information they may receive as to the route or hiding-places of any aborigines whom it may be necessary to apprehend, and to enable them to patrol their districts without keeping on the beaten tracts.

33. They will be careful to see the men's arms and ammunition placed where they can lay their hands on them at night for attack or defence.

34. The greatest care is to be observed in the preservation of the men's arms and ammunition; and as much injury is done to the locks of the carbines by taking them to pieces, it is directed that this shall be done as seldom as possible, and always under the superintendence of an officer.

35. The men shall be fully armed on all duties when mounted.

36. The men at out stations, when in quarters, will, invariably, parade on Sundays in full dress.

37. A compliance with this order will be entered in the monthly return of duties.

38. When in quarters, there will be a daily parade of horses; and officers will take advantage of those men who have been drilled to instruct their detachments in riding, as well as in the carbine, pistol, and sword exercises, on foot and on horseback.

39. The Native Mounted Police will at all times afford the magistrates and constables a ready assistance in the execution of their duty; but it is to be distinctly understood that, except in cases of special necessity, they are not to be employed in performing any of the duties of ordinary constables.

40. When escorts or orderlies are furnished by the Native Mounted Police, they will always, when practicable, be relieved at the nearest stations.

41. Whenever men die or become non-effective, the officer in charge of the station will immediately take charge of the spare horses, arms, and appointments, and preserve them in the best order.

42. Officers commanding stations will inspect all return patrols, and immediately report any irregularity they may observe in men or horses arriving at their posts.

43. The men of the Native Mounted Police are forbidden to appear in the streets unless dressed strictly according to order, and at all times they are expected to be smart and clean.

44. When not interfering with duty, each officer is permitted to employ a trooper as groom, but it is to be understood that he is always armed, appointed, and ready for any service that may be required. He is not on any account to be dressed in livery, or to be employed in any way unconnected with the officer's duties.

45. Every trooper shall have two horses, suited to his weight, told off to him, for which he will be held responsible in all respects. The trooper is not to be deprived of his horses, except for misconduct; nor are they to be changed, except on urgent necessity, without previous reference to head-quarters.

46. Officers in charge of detachments will be held responsible that the saddles are kept in good repair, and fit the horses so as not to injure their backs.

47. Upon the exertion and example of the officers mainly depends the efficiency of the force; their duties are never ending; their presence is required everywhere, and it is solely by their intelligence, unceasing vigilance, and watchful superintendence of the men, that the protection, which is the main object of the force, can be afforded. This can in no way be more effectually carried out than by the constant personal supervision of their different stations on the part of the Inspectors in command of districts, and more than ordinary care in visiting and patrolling the haunts of the aborigines in command of detachments.

48. When any trooper has been incapable of duty for a considerable time from sickness, a special report must be made, in order to his being brought to head-quarters for medical treatment, or removed from the force.

49. The particular attention of officers is directed to the different returns required to be furnished to head-quarters. If those returns are not carefully prepared, it is impossible to arrive at a correct knowledge of the state of the force, as well as of the stores, ammunition, equipments, and supplies required.

50. All returns and reports are to be made as full as possible, so as to afford every information.

51. In the monthly return of duties performed, the number of men on duty each day, the place visited, the number of miles travelled, as well as the nature of the duty on which employed, whose order, and any occurrence of an extraordinary nature, are to be entered.

52. The expenses of the corps must be kept within the narrowest limits consistent with efficiency. No expense, except of the most trivial nature, or under circumstances of emergency to justify it, is to be incurred without previous application to and authority from head-quarters; and in making requisitions the probable amount is to be stated, as well as the work required to be performed.

53. It is expected that the fences of the paddocks as well as the barracks, will, in a great measure, be kept in order by the men themselves.

54. On the first of each month every officer in command of a detachment will send to head-quarters a copy of the diary kept by himself, according to form, stating where he has been each day during the preceding month, the duties performed, occurrences, and any steps taken in consequence, detailing what stations he has visited during the month, the state of each, the condition of the horses, and if any of them are lame or otherwise inefficient, the state of the arms, ammunition, appointments, clothing, and necessaries, the general conduct and discipline of the troopers, and if they appear to have been attentive to their duties and careful of their horses.

55. Officers in charge of detachments are not to hand over their detachments without written authority.

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56. Officers, except on duty, will not quit their districts without leave of absence, obtained in writing.

57. Applications for leave of absence are to be made in time to allow an answer to be returned before the leave requested shall commence.

58. The Government horses are to be kept strictly for the use of troopers.

59. When horses are taken to the forge, an officer is always to accompany them.

60. All saddlery repairs must be inspected, in order to ascertain that the charge is fair and reasonable.

61. The following returns will be sent to the officers in command of divisions, immediately after the first of the month, or quarterly:

(1.) Return of horses, half-yearly.

(2.) Return of rations issued, monthly.

(2.) Officer's diary, monthly.

(4.) Return of arms, stores, etc, quarterly.

62. And whereas it is essential to the good government and discipline of the Native Police Force to prevent and punish certain offences, and that the following rules should be in force for that purposes aforesaid:

(1.) Any person who shall by any means wilfully induce, or attempt to induce any trooper of the Native Police Force to desert from the service, or shall knowingly harbour, aid, or assist any trooper of the Native Police Force who shall desert, or attempt to desert from the service, or who shall by any means wilfully interfere with, or obstruct the discipline of the Native Police Force, shall be liable to pay a penalty not exceeding 20 Pounds, and in default of payment to be imprisoned with or without hard labour for any period not exceeding three calendar months, or at the discretion of the justices before whom any such complaint shall be heard, to be imprisoned without fine for any such period as aforesaid.

(2.) It shall be lawful for any two or more Justices of the Peace to hear and determine in a summary way any complaint under the preceding section.

63. The following are the Dress Regulations.

DRESS REGULATIONS.

When officers attend, as spectators, any review or public ceremony at which His Excellency the Governor is present, they are to appear in uniform.

Officers are not required to procure the full dress, but they will not be permitted to ornament the undress in any way.

Officers in mourning, when dressed in uniform, are to wear a piece of black crape round the left arm above the elbow.

DISTINCTIONS OF RANK.

Commissioner. Sleeve ornament in treble cord.

Inspector. Sleeve ornament in double cord.

Sub-Inspector. Sleeve ornament in single cord.

FULL DRESS.

Jacket. Dark blue cloth, Garibaldi pattern; standing collar, rounded in front, and edged all round with round gold cord; two rows of round gold cord down the front, one-quarter inch apart; Austrian knot of round gold cord on sleeve; round gold cord shoulder straps.

Trousers. Dark blue cloth, with two stripes of gold lace, oak leaf pattern, half an inch wide and quarter an inch apart, down outer seam.

Boots. Wellington.

Spurs. Steel, crane neck.

Sword. Light cavalry, scabbard steel.

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Sword-knot. Gold cord, with acorn end.

Sword-belt. Cavalry pattern, pale Russia leather, snake clasp

Pouch-belt. Pale Russia leather, two and a-half inches wide.

Pouch-box. Pale Russia leather, Q.P. in gilt on flap.

Sabretache and three Slings. Pale Russia leather, Q.P. in gilt.

Gloves. White leather.

Head Dress. Blue cloth forage cap, with black oak leaf band, Q.P. in gilt in front, straight peak.

UNDRESS.

Jacket. Same as full dress, except that red cord is substituted for gold.

Trousers. Dark blue cloth, with two stripes of red cloth, half an inch wide, quarter an inch apart, on outer seam.

Or

Pantaloon. Drab cord.

Boots. With trousers, Wellington boots, with box spurs, steel crane neck; with pantaloons, Napoleon boots and hunting spurs.

Sword-knot. Black leather.

Sabretache. None.

Head-dress. Same as full dress.

Gloves. White leather.

HORSE FURNITURE.

Saddle. Hunting.

Holster wallets. Brown leather.

Bridle. Brown leather, cavalry pattern.

Log-chain. Plaited green hide, steel swivels and rings.

Breastplate and Crupper. Brown leather with leather hearts.

Saddle cloth. Blue cloth.

Patterns of the above are deposited at the office of the Commissioner of Police.

Acting Sub-Inspectors are to wear the uniform provided by Government.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Brisbane, 20th June, 1873.

POLICE.

HIS Excellency the Governor having been pleased, with the advice of the Executive Council, to approve the subjoined additional Rule to "The Rules for the General Management and Discipline of members of the Police Force," the same is hereby published for general information. A. H. PALMER.

All members of the Force will, at all times, salute His Excellency the Governor, the Members of the Executive Council, Judges of the Supreme Court, President of the Legislative Council, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, District Court Judges within their districts, Officers of Her Majesty's Army and Navy when in uniform, and the Commissioner of Police. Officers of the Force will salute their superior officers and gentlemen holding the Commission of the Peace, only when on duty. Gazette [VOL. XIV.] 21 JUNE, 1873. [No. 53] p 969.

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Colonial Secretary's Office,
Brisbane, 22nd May, 1873.

HIS Excellency the Governor directs it to be notified that, with the advice of the Executive Council, Rules 247, 266, 267, and 268, of the Rules and Regulations of the Queensland Police Force of 1869 have been and the same are hereby cancelled. A. H. PALMER. Gazette [VOL. XIV.] 24 MAY, 1873. [No.46] p 838.

The above legislation was repealed by The Police Act of 1937 (1 Geo. VI. No. 12), which was assented to 14th October 1937. Consequently, that was the official end of the Native Police Force.



Appendix C

NATIVE POLICE FORCE REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE of the Legislative Assembly, appointed by ballot on the 1st May, 1861, with power to send for persons and papers, and sit during any adjournment of the House, to enquire into and report on the organisation and management of the Native Police Force; and further to enquire into and report how far it may be practicable to ameliorate the present condition of the aborigines of this Colony, have agreed to the following Report:

Your Committee, entering on their duties fully impressed with the importance of the subjects under consideration, have examined upwards of thirty witnesses, including the principal Officers of the Native Police Corps, and have thus collected a mass of evidence of the most comprehensive character.

To make this record more complete, your Committee have availed themselves of portions of the evidence taken before a Select Committee held in Sydney in the year 1858, and in addition, the Appendices attached to this Report contains much valuable information.

Your Committee cannot but express their regret that more than one witness, capable of affording important information regarding the Native Police, should have refused to submit themselves to an examination.

The questions brought under the notice of your Committee have been:

1. The present condition and organization of the Native Police Force.
2. The charges of unnecessary cruelty brought against their officers when dealing with the Natives, and protecting the settlers against their aggressions.
3. The prospect of civilising, or in any way improving the condition of the aboriginal population.

I. In acquiring information on the subject of the working of the Native Police, your Committee, by selecting persons from all classes, have endeavoured to avoid making the evidence merely the expression of the views of any section of the community, favourable or otherwise, to the abstract question of the employment of an aboriginal protective Force.

The whole weight of the evidence, with one or two exceptions, tends to prove:

1. That any change in the organisation of this Force by the substitution of white troopers for Native, would destroy its efficiency.
2. That since its establishment and reconstruction under its present Commandant, the destruction of property and loss of life on either side has considerably diminished
3. That any attempt to disband the Force suddenly, would, as on a previous occasion, lead to disastrous results.

It is clearly shown by the evidence of the Commandant and some of the witnesses, that any want of discipline that has existed in this Force, or any excesses that are attributable to the Troopers, have arisen mainly from the inefficiency, the indiscretion, and the intemperate habits of some of the Officers, rather than from any defect in the system itself.

It also appears evident that no advantage would accrue on the score of economy, by a reconstruction of this corps in the way that has been proposed by some of the witnesses. Your Committee, therefore, have directed their attention to the necessity of improving the internal organisation of the existing Native Police, and, in pursuing this enquiry, the following points have presented themselves as worthy of recommendation:

1. That it is of the highest importance to secure the services of efficient Officers; the successful working of the Force depending almost entirely on their energy, ability, and sobriety. That Cadets should be appointed, who should serve a certain period under the supervision of the head of the Force before they are considered eligible to hold commissions and that appointments to the Corps should be made solely on the recommendation of the Commandant for the time being, who should be held responsible for the efficiency of his Officers.

2. That no detachment of Native Police should be stationed in the vicinity of any of the towns, as the facilities for obtaining intoxicating liquors tend to demoralize the Troopers, and have, in some cases, resulted in the most serious outrages and breaches of the law.

3. That the Troopers should, in all cases, be recruited from districts at a distance from those in which they are likely to be employed.

4. Monthly returns of all proceedings, and the state of the troops, should be forwarded by each Officer in command of a detachment to the Commandant of the Force, who would furnish a general abstract thereof to the Colonial Secretary, or the head of the Executive Department, under which he may be placed.

5. A more simple and efficient system of keeping the accounts, and furnishing the supplies of clothing, ammunition, &c, to the different divisions, appears to your Committee highly necessary, and, unless in cases where it may be urgently required, your Committee deprecate the practice of removing efficient Officers from the districts they have been accustomed to serve in.

II. The charges brought against the Officers of the Native Police have been investigated as far as practicable.

Your Committee, although aware how difficult it may be in cases where depredations are committed by the blacks to make them amenable to British Law, cannot countenance the indiscriminate slaughter which appears on more than one occasion to have taken place.

Lieutenant Wheeler appears to have acted with indiscretion on his late visit to the Logan and Fassifern. Your Committee recommend that he should be reprimanded, and removed to another district: were it not that in other respects he is a most valuable and zealous Officer, they would feel it their duty to recommend his dismissal.

With respect to the affray at Mr. Mortimer's, it appears that the detachment of Police stationed at Maryborough was most improperly handed over by the Officer in charge, Lieutenant Murray, to Second Lieutenant Morisset, a young officer newly appointed, unacquainted with his duties, and also with the Troopers placed under his control. It also appears by the evidence that the natives had been committing depredations in that neighbourhood for some time previous, and that the assistance of the Police had been demanded. It is likewise shown by Mr. Morisset's report that they attacked the Police in the first instance. After a careful consideration of the evidence in this case, your Committee recommend that Lieutenant Murray should be removed from the Force, both on this account, and his general unfitness for his duties.

Lieutenant Bligh appears, as far as evidence in his case was procurable, to have been justified in his attack on the natives in the town of Maryborough. He is generally spoken of as a zealous and efficient officer, and bears a high character from the Commandant.

Your Committee having been informed that the present Commandant has resigned, or is about to resign, his appointment, feel themselves relieved from the necessity of making any comments on his management of the Force.

Touching the murder of Fanny Briggs by Troopers of the Native Police, it does not appear to your Committee that this unfortunate occurrence militates in any way against the Force. The detachment was stationed too near the Town of Rockhampton, which gave facilities for procuring liquor. The Troopers were on friendly terms with this young woman, and, by the evidence of the Commandant, Mr. Morisset, it will be seen that she promised Toby, one of the Troopers, a bottle of grog if he found the horses belonging to the station. On the day after this note was written she was murdered. Instances of rape and murder resulting from the influence of liquor have occurred when the aborigines committing such excesses have not been members of the Police Force.

III. The evidence taken by your Committee shews beyond doubt that all attempts to Christianise or educate the aborigines of Australia have hitherto proved abortive. Except in one or two isolated cases, after being brought up and educated for a certain period, the Natives of both sexes invariably return to their savage habits. Credible witnesses shew that they are addicted to cannibalism; that

they have no idea of a future state; and are sunk in the lowest depths of barbarism. Missions have been established amongst them at different periods with but partial success; and the same may be said of the schools established in the different Colonies.

Nevertheless, any improvement in the social condition of this benighted race is an object so desirable of attainment that your Committee feel justified in recommending to the notice of the Government the plan sketched forth in the evidence of Mr. Zillman, whose great experience entitles his opinion to favourable consideration.

This proposal embraces the establishment of a Missionary Cotton Company, who, receiving land and other assistance from the Government, would endeavour to educate the children while employing the parents in the necessary work of the plantation. Such a proposal appears to your Committee sufficiently feasible to justify a trial. Should it succeed, the system may be operated upon to any extent.

In bringing their labours to a close, your Committee are desirous to bring under the notice of your Honourable House the assistance they have received from several of the witnesses, who, at great personal inconvenience to themselves, have given so much valuable information.

B. R. MACKENZIE, CHAIRMAN. Legislative Assembly Chambers, Brisbane, 17 July, 1861.



Courtesy of QSL

David Thompson Seymour
Commissioner of Queensland Police 1864 to 1895

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Abbreviations

LA	Legislative Assembly
LC	Legislative Council
Lt	Lieutenant
MBC	Moreton Bay Courier
NMP	Native Mounted Police
NP	Native Police
PM	Police Magistrate
Qld	Queensland
QPG	Queensland Police Gazette
QSA	Queensland State Archives
SLQ	State Library of Queensland
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
Tpr	Trooper
Tprs	Troopers

Books written and published by Paul Dillon:

Edward Dillon, The Forgotten Boroondara Warrior of Bench, Bank and Borough by Paul Dillon ISBN 978-0-646-94176-9 Soft Cover, Australian History;

Edward Emmet Dillon, The Man who would not Fall-in! by Paul Dillon ISBN 978-0-646-94260-5 Soft Cover, Australian History;

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Photo: Author

The Queensland Native Police force were a uniquely, local law enforcement agency on the frontier of Queensland's white settler expansion. There was probably as much support for the force as there was against it. To some it stood as a force for the eradication of Aborigines from the landscape of Queensland. While to others, it was a force for good in that it protected the white settlers, who pioneered the settlement and opening-up of the Queensland wilderness to trade and occupation. The Native Police pointed their guns at armed myall blacks in order to get them to drop their weapons and to stop killing livestock and white men.

The Native Police seem to have eluded any sensible critique of its role because of the inability of commentators to put aside their own prejudices in attempting to define exactly what were the purpose, procedure and results of the Native Police.

Many commentators have raged over the organisation that at any one time, really only managed to put on the law enforcement line an operational force of about 150 mounted troopers armed with a single shot breech-loading rifle. Given the size of its jurisdiction and its limited resources, you could be forgiven for thinking they were the most unlikely bunch of sepoys ever to sit a horse. To add to the farce, it was said of their target, the myall blacks, that their wandering from place to place in unknown and, therefore, inaccessible scrubs, was so great that it rendered all attempts to surprise them ineffectual. However, the native trooper was the dead equal of any myall black. Therein lay their usefulness, their utility, for wherever a myall could go, so could a trooper just as surely.

It is often said a Mountie "always gets his man". For the Queensland Native Police, their call was, "People who break laws in this land, whether they be whites, blacks or browns, will not escape punishment."